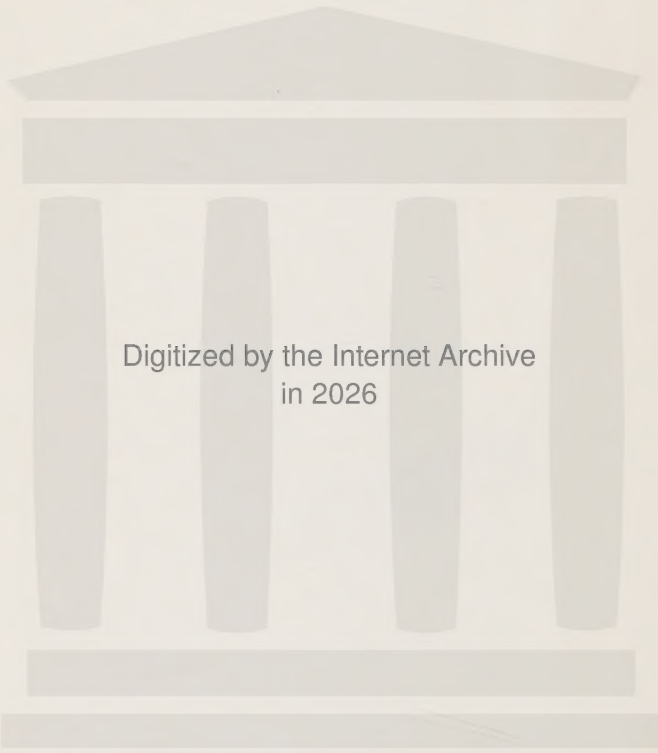


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ANTOINETTE STERLING

AND OTHER CELEBRITIES



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Antoinette, Sterling

Frontispiece

ANTOINETTE STERLING
AND OTHER CELEBRITIES .

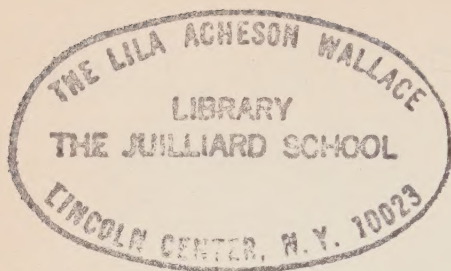
STORIES AND IMPRESSIONS OF
ARTISTIC CIRCLES

BY
M. STERLING MACKINLAY, M.A. OXON

Mackinlay, M.S.

WITH 16 PORTRAITS AND VARIOUS FACSIMILES

London : HUTCHINSON & CO.
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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY MOTHER

JULIUS ROSEN OF MUSIC
L. V. 1878
171 Madison Avenue New York 27

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JULIUS ROSENTHAL & SONS
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ANTOINETTE STERLING

AND OTHER CELEBRITIES

CHAPTER I

THE CHILDHOOD OF ANTOINETTE STERLING

“**G**RANDLY simple and simply grand.”

Thus was Antoinette Sterling described by one who knew her well both in her public and private capacity. It would be difficult to sum up her life in more concise terms.

Simplicity! This was the keynote of her character. In religious feeling, thought, and conversation, in her professional career and her daily existence, simplicity and its two kindred qualities, sincerity and truthfulness, were the predominating features.

Nor is it astonishing that this should be so. Born as she was in America, of Puritan ancestry, with a martyr's blood flowing in her veins, and brought up from childhood not merely to despise what was underhand, but absolutely to condemn falsehood as one of the most deadly sins, one need not seek far to discover those causes which combined to build up a nature ready to

ANTOINETTE STERLING AND OTHER CELEBRITIES

endure any penalty sooner than take refuge behind a lie. I remember my mother on one occasion saying that rather than tell a deliberate untruth she would suffer her right hand to be cut off. No one who knew her intimately could have the slightest doubt but that she would have done this without hesitation had such a grim alternative ever presented itself. John Bradford surrendered his life at the merciless stake sooner than be false to his religious principles, and centuries afterwards the same unquenchable fire still burned no less fiercely in the spirit of his descendant.

It is said that the first years are the most important in forming character. These pages will trace in some degree those early influences which tended to give Antoinette Sterling strength to face the world with so bold a front after her father's death. It will be seen how far the training of girlhood went towards fitting her for that struggle which was not only to win for her the foremost position among the contraltos of her day, but to enable her to hold it firmly for twenty years, until the sudden and unexpected death of her husband dealt a blow from which to the close of her life she never recovered.

Antoinette Sterling was born at Sterlingville in the State of New York. Like its neighbouring villages, Sterlingberg and Sterling-bush, it had been named after her father, James Sterling. It lay in a district abounding with pine-trees and spruce and tall slender beeches striving to reach up to heaven; great big oaks, more earthly, with their strong roots digging deep down into their mother's warm lap; pungent hemlocks and winter-greens; snow, and ice, and cold—cold which could be

THE CHILDHOOD OF ANTOINETTE STERLING

hardly measured by the thermometer—snow so deep as often to imprison the family within their four walls, until the old Irish retainer arrived from across the fields to help in the rougher duties of the house. His first task upon such mornings was the shovelling away of the white mass which had drifted against the front door during the stormy hours of the night. More than once the unhappy man found himself with a toe or finger so completely frozen that it had to be amputated, or more probably sawn off in those days, when health was so rampant that no doctor could live there for lack of disease. The latter statement is of course open to the criticism that the non-residence of doctors may have been the *cause* rather than the result of health being rampant in Sterlingville. This, however, is by the way.

“Until I was eleven years old,” wrote my mother, in describing her childhood, “there were but two deaths in our village. The first was that of a man who was struck by lightning. The second occurred through one of the workmen, after his Christmas dinner,”—ominous circumstance!—“falling into the big wheel, built in connexion with one of the blast furnaces owned by my father, who was engaged in the iron industry. Oh, the attraction those places had for me! I shall never forget how I revelled in watching the red-hot iron as it poured in a liquid stream into the beds of sand, there to cool into long bars ready to be shaped for the use of man. The village was formed by these huge furnaces and the usual congregation of buildings necessary for the carrying on of ironworks upon a large scale. I used to be greatly infatuated with the immense monsters from whose mouth gushed forth that molten stream, to be

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rechristened, after its fiery ordeal, by the name of 'pig-iron,' though why it should be called 'pig' I cannot understand. I always forgot to ask, and foolishly accepted this cognomen without question."

Such was my mother's picture of these three villages in which my grandfather had been responsible for the building of the roads, bridges, stores, houses, church, everything. Money was quite an unnecessary commodity for his family. Over all the countryside they only had to go in and ask for what they wanted. Every one knew that it would be all right ; Jim Sterling would pay for whatever was ordered. But it gave his children rather curious ideas of shopping. If any of them wanted some apples, they would go into the "stores," pick out whichever sort they fancied, and say, "Send up a barrellful." In choosing material for a dress, it would be a case of, "I guess I like that colour ; send up all you have." My mother never quite got out of this way of shopping, even when she made her home in London. Her principle of making small purchases was to order them in somewhat formidable quantities, twelve being usually taken as a suitable round number. This habit became a standing joke. Consequently, when any friend went shopping with her, and she had made up her mind upon purchasing, say, a new travelling trunk, the decision would be met with the laughing suggestion : "Say, let's have a dozen !" which promptly provoked the American exclamation, "Why, do tell !"

The workmen round Sterlingville lived in little framework cottages, each with its own garden in which flowers, fruit, and vegetables grew in a desultory way. There were a few struggling apple-trees, too, but these

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generally became so downhearted and discouraged by the time the cold weather came, that they bore only the smallest, nastiest, sourest, and most unappetizing produce.

My mother, with her brothers and sisters, used to attend the same school as the other children in the neighbourhood. The schoolhouse, which was a large one, used to be converted into a veritable bakehouse when the big stone hearth was piled up with dry wooden logs.

Ever of an inquiring turn of mind, and with the roving spirit of exploration strongly developed, Nettie Sterling, when little more than a baby, found her way one afternoon to this scholastic retreat. To the surprise of the teacher and the assembled class, the door was slowly pushed open, and there peered in upon them a small, dark-eyed maiden, over whose head there had barely passed three years, and over whose dress there had been loosely fastened an all-enveloping waistcoat belonging to her father. Seeing that Jim Sterling was a man of exceptional height, the "vest," as they call it in America, did not fit his little daughter quite as neatly as it might have done. However, it had taken her fancy, and made her feel extremely important, so that it was to some extent a satisfactory garment. Wandering in with a quiet, self-possessed air, the strange little figure nodded genially to the mistress and sat down in a vacant seat, saying, "I'se come, Cassy." Clarissa, that estimable lady's unabbreviated name, was too big an effort for the wee mouth and understanding of the new pupil.

It used to be the custom in those parts for the village schoolma'am to live, eat, and sleep, free of charge, with

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each family in turn, the length of her stay varying according to the number of children sent to the school. When she had made her way through the entire round of available hostesses, she started again at the beginning and commenced a series of return visits. From her point of view, the plan must have seemed eminently satisfactory, for it reduced the cost of living to practically nil. Whether the arrangement was as much appreciated by the children whose parents were entertaining their mistress is rather more doubtful.

In many ways Antoinette Sterling was brought up with great strictness. Her father never allowed a pack of cards in the house, since, in his opinion, any one who took part in such sinful games would be condemned to eternal damnation. He would warn his children against them, telling terrible stories of quarrels to which they gave rise, of the money which was lost, and the terrible tragedies which resulted. When my mother came to England she took to playing cards as a recreation, and always enjoyed a game of bezique or whist ; but the effect of her early training still remained to some degree, and playing for money was a thing which was never, under any circumstances, permitted when she was of the party.

Alcohol was another thing writ large in Jim Sterling's mental "index expurgatorius." Wine and beer were never to be seen at the table, and although a little brandy was kept in the house, the inmates were never permitted to make use of it save for medicinal purposes, and even then only in cases of the strictest necessity. It was hidden safe under lock and key in a dark cupboard which was regarded by the children with a mysterious dread, as though it contained some evil spirit, ready to jump out

THE CHILDHOOD OF ANTOINETTE STERLING

and destroy them if they ever ventured to unlock the door without permission. Little wonder, then, that with this bringing up Antoinette Sterling should have had throughout her life such a horror of intoxicating drink.

Jim Sterling was what might be termed a "heavy capitalist." He weighed some twenty stone. My mother always vigorously asserted that it was thirty stone, but the lesser weight is sufficiently massive to suit our purpose of showing that he was a man of more than average size. One of the leading business men in the northern part of New York State, he owned in all seven blast furnaces, together with some large tracts of iron ore beds. He was a kind employer, ever willing to look after the comfort and well-being of those under him. If he found an Irish labourer who seemed a specially good workman, he would send over to the Emerald Isle for the man's wife, children and possessions, and at once put up a cottage for them on the estate. A magnificently built man, 6ft. 3in. in height, he was yet the shortest of three brothers, the tallest of whom was no less than 6ft. 6in. They were indeed worthy Yankee descendants of that sturdy generation who had crossed over from an Old to a New England. By the way the derivation of this word "Yankee," which is looked on in England as synonymous with the general term "American," is interesting. According to a statement made by Washington Irving in one of his books, the word owes its origin to the attempt of the Indians to pronounce "English." The nearest approach they could get to it was "Yenghees," and from this to "Yankee" was an obvious transition. It is, therefore, not a little curious that when we refer to

our cousins "across the herring pond" as "Yankees," we are simply calling them "English"!

Jim Sterling was, not unnaturally, famous through all the country round for his tremendous strength. Many wonderful stories were told in open-mouthed astonishment of the feats he accomplished on various memorable occasions. One day, for instance, he came upon some labourers at the side of the road who were meeting with great difficulty in their attempt to catch a steer. He at once came to their assistance, seized the beast by the horns, and before it could say Jack Robinson, as an Irishman would put it, turned it over on to its back and held it down till properly secured. Again, when out driving, if his horses did anything so foolhardy as to try to run away, he merely laughed, took hold of the reins with a firm grasp, and pulled them up on to their haunches till they had leisure to repent and return to the paths of virtue. He once had a dream that, going along a road, he came to a bridge which had broken down. At breakfast, next morning, he told his wife the story, and dismissed the matter from his mind. Shortly after this he was driving homewards on a pitch-dark night when suddenly the horses stopped dead. A kind of feeling flashed across his mind that the dream had come true. He applied the lash to the unwilling pair. They gave one bound forward. Carriage and all fell with a drop of eight feet into the stream beneath. Never losing his nerve for an instant, he urged the animals on through the flooded water (which had swept away the entire structure), and eventually brought the carriage in safety to the further side. When he reached home, he merely said: "Here are your candies; I'm

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afraid you'll find them rather wet," and went off to change his clothes, and it was only through a servant finding the drenched garments upstairs that the story came out at all.

My mother has left some delightfully characteristic descriptions of her early life and surroundings, of which the following is an example:—

"In those days it used to be one of my greatest delights to try and ride not horse, but *cow*-back out in the fair pastures, where the kine would congregate, quietly musing and chewing their cud, at peace with all mankind. This chewing of the cud was always a mystery to my youngest brother and myself, when we used to steal up gently and try to climb on to the back of one of them. The cow was usually unwilling to allow us to do this. Full of dignity, the ponderous beast would gather up her four legs, and with one great upheaval of her soft, yet cumbrous body, rise up and leave her would-be companions utterly discomfited. After this we wandered off, perhaps towards the river, where stood the long red bridge with its great logs sticking out at the sides in uneven lengths, as though specially made for the village children to sit on. There I would take up my position, with legs dangling contentedly, at the end of the very longest log. More often than not my feet would be quite bare, for in those young days I seemed to have an inherent respect for fashion. With a slavish conformity, one had 'to fall in' with its stern laws, or be shot down by that unerring marksman, Public Opinion. Therefore I used to follow the example of the workaday people, who appeared on all occasions barefoot, the grass being like

velvet to walk on. Perhaps that is the reason why I now have broad comfortable soles to carry about my eleven stone ten pounds of flesh, bones, and muscle, instead of those ill-used feet which are so often crushed into too small shoes. I have come to the conclusion that the pain of the foot varies inversely as the size of the shoe.

“In those days of thoughtless youth my brother and I would relentlessly seize the fat little worms and squash them on to hooks, or rather force the hooks into their poor insides—just as the grown-up boys and girls do, unless they have profited by man’s great inventions. In the latter event they sacrifice fair play towards the innocent fish by using insidious hand-made flies, to deceive the sharp little eyes and hungry little stomachs of the piscatorial world which lies ‘down among the dead men’ in the mighty deep.”

At her American home resided her two grandmothers. One of them was short of stature, mild and retiring in disposition. She was never known to scold. If her grandchildren disobeyed her, or deserved chastisement, she would just say : “Ah, well ; some day I shall be gone.” This invariably reduced the offending members of the family to bitter tears. If her feelings got very much ruffled, she would go out on the verandah, sit down and rock herself vigorously to and fro till she felt calm again. On the rare occasions when she became seriously angry, she would order the trap to be made ready, and say to whoever was going to take her out, “Drive like the wind.”

The other grandmother was exactly her opposite in every way. Tall and strong, scarcely knowing what it

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was to be ill, if *she* went out for a drive she would take the reins herself. A splendid horsewoman, she would ride with legs astride like a man. Above all things she hated the English. She delighted in filling the heads of her grandchildren with the stories of the glorious War of Independence, the "Pilgrim Fathers," and "The Mayflower."

Oh, mighty "Mayflower"! Oh, most marvellous "Mayflower"! What a vastly wonderful and wonderfully vast vessel thou must needs have been! Out of all the millions of Americans alive at the present day, there is hardly a solitary soul who does not proudly boast that his ancestors trod thy deck. Like George Washington—who is symbolical of the whole race—they are, every one of them, incapable of allowing an untruth to pass their lips. Oh, "Mayflower," mammoth of elasticity! Oh, Truth, no less elastic!

In glowing colours the old lady would depict the brutality of the English in not only fighting against those who had themselves come over from England, but even hiring mercenary troops to help them. Moreover, the fact was always deeply impressed upon the children that they were descended in direct line from William Bradford, who was the first governor of the colony, and brother of that reverend John whom these same brutal English had martyred.

The Anglophobe feelings engendered by her grandmother were fostered and even strengthened by the talks which Antoinette Sterling used to have with the cobbler of the village. This old fellow was an Irish refugee, and delighted in telling still more wonderful stories against the race of oppressors. Of all the tales, none

became more vividly impressed upon her mind than that concerning the famous so-called "Boston Tea-party," which related how a shipload of tea was sent to Boston for the inhabitants to drink, and how they retaliated by emptying it into the harbour. As a result my mother would never touch it as a beverage under any circumstances. Her intimate friends were aware of this, and when expecting her to spend an afternoon at their house (my mother could never bring herself to make any of those ultra-fashionable calls of fifteen minutes), some cocoa was always brought up for her to drink at tea-time. With new acquaintances who did not know of this aversion, the tea when offered would be refused, and a request made for a cup of hot water in its place.

Antoinette Sterling began her musical training at a somewhat early age. Her piano instruction was commenced when she was five, and at the age of seven she had her first singing lessons from her eldest sister, Mary. At twelve she left the little school-house at Sterlingville and went to board fifteen miles away at the Clinton Seminary. Here the more serious training of her voice was begun under the guidance of Anna Sykes. Even in those days her compass was exceptional. She would sing with the contraltos in the concerted music, and go down to the low E flat with the greatest ease. Yet at the request of the mistress she could come to the assistance of the sopranos in their difficult struggle with high notes, being able to take the B flat above the treble stave, and hold it on for almost any length of time. She was very much spoiled by the teachers, and not without reason, for they used to show off her singing

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whenever any strangers came to view the Seminary. This would make such a favourable impression upon the visitors that they generally ended by sending their daughters to the same school, so that they might develop equally fine voices. The fond hopes were unfortunately not always realized by the parents—but that is a mere detail.

Being such an admirable decoy duck, she was allowed to do practically anything she liked without being reprimanded. For this reason she was invariably made the spokesman if there were any grievances which the girls were anxious to lay before their mistress. It was the custom for each of them to keep a journal which was looked over once a week by those in authority. If Antoinette Sterling thought they had been unfair to any of the pupils, she would promptly include it in her writings. As is usually the case with compositions which are intended to meet the eye of a teacher, the contents of these journals were not quite what one would naturally expect girls to write. Here are two extracts from that which was kept by my mother:—

“*Feb. 12th, Saturday.*—Bubbles have been in my mind, but they have not been bubbles of regret. I must always put on a brave face and meet compositions ‘like a man,’ and not wear away my temper and patience by drops of fretfulness, finally to hear some one say: ‘You aim too high, Nettie,’ though I read somewhere about it being better to *aim* high, even if we didn’t reach the mark.”

“*Oct. 27th.*—In the days of strong-minded females it would be well to be reminded of the strength and beauty of character of women as drawn by Shakespeare. As I saw in my criterion, he should be honoured for con-

ceiving of 'feminine constancy and elevation of purpose.' So also Raphael, who revered the virtues of woman. He saw the visit of woman's angel in maternity, in marriage, in music, and in faith, and he painted the Madonna, the 'Apocalisse,' the St. Cecilia and the St. Catherine. From every man who gives his ideas of woman we can easily tell the character of his wife, mother, sister, and daughter. Ah me! We must take heed so that every man may not set his seal to the standard set up by Shakespeare. 'Every woman is weak and wicked.' I verily believe that if a man's wife excelled in everything but culinary arts, he would have only half the respect and love for her powers, and if she 'know nothing in the universe beyond the cooking stove,' why then she is surely worse off than before. She is either 'detestable blue stocking' or a 'weak silly woman.' Deliver me, ye gods!"

The school used to have a weekly paper to which the girls contributed articles. My mother would write most harrowing tales of adventure for this periodical, and in them did her best to rival Jules Verne. One of her stories was a girlish cross between "Gulliver's Travels" and "From the Earth to the Moon." It related how a small but select party went up in a balloon, and somehow reached Mars, after which a wonderfully detailed description was given of what they saw there.

What with her musical and literary efforts, she used to give the teachers plenty to think about. As for her voice, it had such power that the young men at a college about half a mile away declared that they could hear her practising. One night, to show her love of melody, she wound up a musical box and hid it in a cupboard beneath the stairs. From this quiet retreat there proceeded the soothing strains of "Home, sweet

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Home!" much to the annoyance of the head mistress, who, with an exclamation of disgust, began to search high and low for the offending instrument. As if in derision of her efforts, it promptly changed its tune, and began to pour out a more or less pertinent criticism upon the situation with "Oh, where, tell me where!"

The foregoing is a brief sketch of the early life of Antoinette Sterling, and of the influences which were at work to mould her character and fit her for the career which lay before her. Three figures we have seen standing out in special prominence—her father, with his enormous strength, both moral and physical, a man to whom cards and drink appeared to be the invention of Satan; and her grandmothers, one tall and fearless, of splendid constitution, powerful in her likes and dislikes, and above all hating the British nation; the other, an old lady of gentle nature, ruling by affection rather than force, kind and thoughtful, one who, though overshadowed by those around her, cannot have been without a considerable effect by her example.

Such was my mother's girlhood, and such in the natural course of events would her life have remained, flowing through quiet channels "far from the madding crowd." We have seen her free from anxiety and responsibility, untroubled by thoughts of money, protected from any necessity of making her own livelihood, above all with a heaven-sent gift of voice, which her father loved to hear at home, but would never under any circumstances have allowed her to use in a professional capacity. And happy? Yes, so far as any one can be considered happy who remains in ignorance of all that life really means in its broader sense, happy as

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those were happy who dreamed from morn till eve in the land of the lotus.

Had nothing come to break the spell of this peaceful existence, the greater world outside would have never known the name, never heard the voice, never felt the uplifting influence of Antoinette Sterling.

But a sudden change was to come over the scene. The warm, grateful sun and the clear blue sky were to be hidden behind threatening thunderclouds. The gentle breezes were to give place to tempestuous tornado. The storm was to burst, the flood to rise higher and higher. Soon she was to be whirled by an irresistible force from this lazy backwater out into the angry waters of the roaring river. Here truly was there need of a steady hand, a keen eye, and above all a brave heart. How else could she hope to guide her bark in safety through the whirling eddies, on past the relentless rocks, and the no less dangerous shallows, down, down the river of life, till at last her soul found repose as the flood bore her out on to the peaceful waters of eternity !



ANTOINETTE STERLING

From Photo taken prior to her leaving America

CHAPTER II

CAREER IN AMERICA

WHEN Antoinette Sterling was sixteen years old, a complete change came over the circumstances and surroundings amid which she had been living. The heavy tariff which had hitherto been laid on all imported iron was suddenly removed, and the English manufacturers flooded the American market with their goods. The result was disastrous. There was an entire failure of the iron industry, and with it Jim Sterling found himself completely ruined. He never recovered from the shock, and within a very few months death brought a merciful release from a position which could not but have been terrible to him.

Thus it came about that the family were thrown upon their own resources, and Antoinette Sterling found that it had become necessary for her to make her own living.

At this time Mrs. Willard, of the Troy Female Seminary, was sending out teachers each year to the Southern States. Here many planters were willing to pay salaries to Northern young women as resident teachers in their families. She went to interview this lady, accepted a post upon a plantation in Mississippi, and at once set off alone upon her long journey

southwards to live among strangers, leaving behind home, family, friends, all that she had ever loved.

What must have been her feelings, thus uprooted from the garden in which she had been so gently tended and sheltered from the cold blasts, and now suddenly transplanted to a strange spot, where no familiar forms came near, where nothing stood between her and the storms of life !

How terrible to her eyes must have appeared those scenes of slavery, amid which she found herself obliged to live ! In the house where she was staying the girls represented the best families in the district. Yet they would pass the slaves unnoticed, or if they found them asleep, kick them on the head to waken them. While living with these people, Antoinette Sterling was asked to accept an engagement to teach singing at a school close by. She said she could not possibly do so, as she had had no previous experience. However, she was induced to try, and went there each week to give a lesson to a whole roomful of girls. A master had to be in the room with her to keep order, as she was too young to inspire discipline, and more inclined to join in making noise than attempting to stop it. How she managed to teach she could never tell, but the fact remains : every one acknowledged that the singing had never before made such progress.

During her sojourn in Mississippi, Antoinette Sterling found the hostile feeling against the Northerners becoming so pronounced as to render her position intolerable. She was unable to collect the long arrears of salary which were due, and a passport was denied her ; but, nothing daunted, she resolved to return to her friends,

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or perish in the attempt. On a dark, rainy night, in company with a girl who had been teaching on a neighbouring plantation, she bade adieu to the sunny South. They were assisted by loyal blacks, but were forced to travel by night, going through swamps and byways, enduring dangers and exposure. After hairbreadth escapes innumerable, at last they found themselves back in the North, safe among friends once more. I give below extracts from two letters which were written just after her return. This was in the year 1862, while the war was at its height :—

“ *July 12.*—Europe has not yet received me, in spite of all those restless yearnings, which have increased with years, to visit her shores. Alas ! my hopes do not seem much nearer their fruition than in those days, which now seem so long ago, when I was like a butterfly as to my knowledge of life. Now I have been through fiery furnaces, and through pleasant paths ; have had great joy and great sorrow ; found the thorns with the flowers, but plucked the flowers in spite of the piercing thorns ; have loosed my boat from its moorings, and rowed over Mason and Dixey’s line to the ‘land of the sunny South’—the traitorous, black-hearted country of rebels, would-be murderers of our beautiful flag ; taught music for nearly two years, and succeeded ; lost my salary, and come home, with a heart on fire for our noble North, to find that my youngest brother, great-hearted and brave, only seventeen years old, has gone to the war.”

“ *July 19.*—I feel like a rudderless ship in a great storm, with a danger of all the hopes being drowned. Those worn heart-hopes quiver with fear of being crushed under the firm tread of—is it Destiny ? Sometimes I feel that the good Father, Whose child I am, and Who gave all these hopes and desires, will not allow them to be crushed without fruition, if I will only be true.

But will He give me light to know how to be true, to find the path, and strength to follow it after being found ? I would never even *flinch* from the thorns if only sure of success. It seems to me I could walk on them, and through them, even though I met with naught but thorns at first, if only I felt the glorious sureness of finding the haven at last. Sometimes I am wicked and almost reckless, and have no hope, no courage, but wish I could ravel out a few years and pick up the poor weak stitches, and live a life like everybody else—get married, dress, gossip, read love stories, and so on. But I have a hunger, a yearning to be good and to do good, to be noble in thought and deed, and at such times I feel I have some work to do. If I could only find it and the strength to do it, I should be overjoyed ; and, oh ! so calm and at rest. I have been so long like some ship, tossed about by the wind, anchorless, rocking on troubled waters. Why I forget how to remember, from the necessity of trying to think how to accomplish it all without money. It makes me bitter to think of that money. How many souls has it claimed ? How often has it galled and crushed out the warmest, youngest life ? Thus I am selfish, and not noble in my thoughts. I am wearing away the sound health I have always had. How little we know of hearts, though our persons may be so near ! I thank God for my kind, noble-souled friends ! Some of them are my ideals in hearts and intellect.

“I must love and be loved, or I starve. If with those who don’t love me and whom I don’t love, I am as restless as the sea, and crystallize, freeze my own heart by reason of all the love being turned back. I wish I were in love, for then I should be better, because he would be noble in soul and intellect, pure and great-hearted, true to himself and to his God. Have I been gifted with the rare voice, but not the artistic appreciation necessary to success ?”

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Antoinette Sterling now began to study singing in earnest under a proper teacher, and, having obtained the necessary money, went to the Normal Academy of Music, to the great maestro Bassini. The first time she arrived for a lesson, he asked her to sing a scale. When she had done so, he arose from the piano stool full of excitement, said that she had a very remarkable voice, and that if his daughter had had such a one he would spend the whole of his time and, if necessary, his last farthing on its cultivation.

Bassini was an old Italian singer, and had a wonderful method. He found that through the admirable way in which Anna Sykes had been looking after her voice there was no need to waste precious time (as is unfortunately so often the case) in making her *unlearn* what she had been taught previously. Nevertheless, it seemed as if he wasted a good deal of time, for as long as she stayed with him he gave her nothing but the simplest exercises, not a single song. Yet in reality this was the finest thing he could do, for he enabled her to lay a firm foundation, on which she could rear any structure she liked without fear of its collapsing. The tendency is to hurry over exercises and abandon them with all speed for the greater attractions of songs, yet this is the most fatal thing to do, if a long and lasting success is sought.

After spending some time under Bassini, the contralto went to New York and through the maestro's kindness was enabled to place herself under the Spanish professor, Señor Abella, husband of the great Greek contralto, D'Angri. While studying with her new master, she thought that she might improve the shining hour by singing professionally. It was not long before

she found herself permanently attached to Dr. Adams' church at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year, so that she improved it to some purpose. The famous Presbyterian church was one of the largest in the city, and had a congregation which represented about a third of the wealth of New York, as nearly all the millionaires of that decade used to attend.

Antoinette Sterling was very timid for the first few times at the bare idea of singing before such a number of people. "I can't do it, I can't do it!" she would say, as the tears rolled down her cheeks. But she mastered this feeling, and soon found that she *could* do it, and the impression she used to make upon her hearers may be judged from the fact that when she revisited New York in 1896, more than thirty years afterwards, old men and women came up to her in the streets or at receptions, called her "Miss Sterling" as in the old days, and told her that they had never forgotten her singing at the church.

After some months she was advised by her many friends to go to Europe for further study. This only added fresh fuel to the desire which had long been smouldering in her heart, and when one of the congregation came to her with an offer to advance the necessary funds, she accepted gladly. There is a pretty little story in connexion with this episode. The friend in question was a man of immense wealth, well known for the amount of good which he did with his money. He made the offer with the philanthropic motive of enabling a young girl with an unusually fine voice to have the opportunity of striving after the world-wide fame which it was his belief she could attain with proper training.

To lend her a thousand dollars was in his eyes merely a way of "giving" it to her without hurting her pride. When two years later she came to him, bringing back the sum which she had "borrowed," he was at first so surprised that he could hardly speak. When he had recovered from the shock, he made out a formal acknowledgment, but instead of putting "Received of Miss Sterling," he wrote "Received of True Blue," and handing it to her with a smile, said that he had never expected the money back. Afterwards he added that he had lent money to numbers of people, but that she was the first one who had ever repaid him with more than thanks.

As soon as the trip to Europe had been definitely decided upon, she went to tell Dr. Adams. He at once agreed with her that it was a wise choice, although they would all be sorry to lose her. As a mark of esteem, the pastor and the leading members of the congregation organized a concert in her honour, presenting her with the proceeds as a mark of gratitude for her assistance at their service. At the same time they gave her a gold watch, with a suitable inscription, which she always treasured as a souvenir of her connexion with his church. And so it came about that, for the first time in her life, Antoinette Sterling left her native shores.

Of the period which followed, during which she had lessons under Manuel Garcia, and afterwards from his pupils, Mathilde Marchesi and Pauline Viardot, meeting, moreover, with Brahms, Frederick Hiller, the old Emperor of Germany, and other interesting personages, a description will be given in the chapter devoted to Señor Garcia's pupils.

At last the time came when it seemed best for her to abandon further study in Europe and go back once more to her own country, where there was every likelihood of success, considering the invaluable precepts and assistance which she had received from Garcia's famous "Method of Singing."

Upon her return, Antoinette Sterling went to stay with some old friends—Mr. and Mrs. Huss—and at once began to sing at the best concerts in New York and elsewhere. Among other important engagements she took part with Mme. Rudersdorff in the first performance at Boston of Bach's "Passion Music."

During the months which followed, she went through many experiences, grave and gay. Two of these were specially interesting as being connected with names which were very prominent at that time—Emily Faithfull and Horace Greeley.

The former—of whom, by the way, Rutland Barrington, of Savoy opera fame, is a nephew—was one of the earliest advocates of Woman's Rights. When only twenty-five years old she had founded a printing-office in London, with women composers—a startling innovation—and was appointed publisher to Queen Victoria. Three years later she started "The Victoria," a magazine in which she advanced the claims of women to remunerative employment, and in 1872 she decided to go out to America upon a lecturing tour, with the object of spreading her propaganda over a larger area.

During this visit Miss Faithfull held several meetings at the Steinway Hall, in New York. Miss Sterling went to one out of curiosity, though not in any very serious spirit, for she was so wrapped up in her music as

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to know practically nothing about the big questions of the day.

The hall was packed with people, who listened intently to all that was said. During the evening the speaker proved conclusively that Woman was Man's equal, in spite of all his attempts to keep her in slavish subjection. Not only that, but she was in many ways his superior. In fact, by the end of her discourse poor Man had been so utterly crushed by convincing argument, that any unhappy member of the sex who had ventured to attend was forced to bow his head for very shame. When the last words had been spoken and Miss Faithfull sat down, there were cries for a song from "Miss Sterling," who had been recognized by many on entering the hall. The shouts went on for so long a time that there was nothing for it but to comply with their wishes.

The vocalist rose from her seat, and made her way on to the platform, without having a notion what to sing. She felt utterly confused by the noise and the unexpectedness of the whole thing, and so, without thinking what she was doing, took a deep breath, and started wildly on the first music that happened to come into her head.

Out of all the songs included in her repertoire she stumbled by the merest fluke upon absolutely the most inappropriate, and, to the disgust of Miss Faithfull, began to sing "A Man's a Man *for a' that*." A mighty roar of laughter went up. The audience were simply wild with delight, cheering and clapping, and stamping their feet. They realized from her surprised face that in making this choice she had not been actuated by

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a mischievous desire to perpetrate a joke. Had it not been for her obvious youth and inexperience, nothing would have ever persuaded them that her intention had not been to make a hit at the Woman's Rights Question.

It was only a few weeks after the foregoing episode that the citizens of New York were overwhelmed with grief by the death of one of America's greatest men, Horace Greeley. Born of the most humble parentage, he began his journalistic career at an early age, and gradually worked his way up to the foremost rung on the ladder of fame. He used to write essays, poetry, and general articles, while the "Log Cabin," a Whig campaign paper which he ran, contributed largely to the election of General Harrison as President. At the age of thirty he brought out the "New York Tribune," and remained editor till the close of his life. During the great slavery war he published in the "Tribune" the impressive "Prayer of Twenty Millions," and within a month the "Emancipation" proclamation was issued. He was an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency in 1872, and died the following November. Upon the day of his funeral the streets of New York were impassable, owing to the crowd which had gathered together to pay honour to his memory.

"I happened to be passing in the vicinity," wrote my mother, describing the incident, "when a man suddenly rushed up, seized me by the arm, and said, 'You must come and sing.' He wedged his way with me through the living wall and into the church, went somewhere for the music, and took me to the organ loft, high up above the gallery. Miss Kellogg had just finished singing,

'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' " Some of the most prominent men of America were to carry the coffin. Just as they had lifted it, and were starting down the aisle, unexpectedly there came a voice from far up in the church (the singer almost invisible), "Beyond the smiling and the weeping."

The bearers stood still during the music. The song closed. Still they and all around them remained motionless. A pin might have been heard to drop. Then, after a long pause, the voice in the organ loft recommenced, and sang the anthem all through again. As that glorious contralto voice rang forth many people wept, some even fainted, so truly thrilling and tragic was the whole scene.

"In my youthfulness I could not see anything so marvellous in it," she writes ; "but now I believe that it was because these words, 'Beyond the smiling,' written by Dr. Bonar and divinely set by Zundel, so exactly fitted Horace Greeley's life and passing on."

Soon after Miss Sterling had returned from her visit to Europe, Dr. Henry Ward Beecher heard her sing at the house of a mutual friend, and at once decided that he must secure her services for his church at Brooklyn. He approached her upon the subject, and made her a very good offer, but it was a long time before she could make up her mind to accept the position, as she was unwilling to go to another place of worship after having been with Dr. Adams.

However, at last she agreed, and sang for him regularly as long as she remained in New York.

Dr. Beecher, who was a brother of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, authoress of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was

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a speaker of remarkable eloquence. After preaching during eight years at Indianapolis he had come to New York, where he was appointed the first pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn.

In his sermons he ignored formal creeds, and preached the gospel according to his own ideas. He was an ardent supporter of temperance. Moreover, he strongly denounced slavery, and, when the Civil War broke out, was the means of raising and equipping a volunteer regiment, for which his congregation found the necessary funds. When he came over to lecture in England a rather clever Limerick went the round, with a punning reference to his name :—

Said the great Congregational Preacher
To a hen, " You're a beautiful creature."
The bird upon that
Laid an egg in his hat,
And thus did the Hen-ry-Ward Beecher.

In his addresses from the pulpit he would on occasions startle his congregation a good deal by the unexpectedness of his remarks. My mother used to recount two instances of this which she herself heard during the services.

One time he opened his discourse with the words, " It's damned hot to-day ! " Every one inwardly agreed with him. Some even nodded their heads sympathetically. Of course, he at once attracted attention by his forcible utterance, and that was exactly what he wanted. He repeated the statement with still greater emphasis, " It's *damned* hot to-day ! " Then he proceeded to explain that he had heard one of his congregation make that very remark as he was coming into the

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church. The morals to be drawn are sufficiently obvious to give a very good idea of the line which he took, and though the sermon was being preached entirely extempore, without preparation of any kind, he never seemed to stumble or even hesitate. It proved, in fact, to be one of the most powerful sermons which she ever heard him deliver.

Another time he brought a very vivid truth home to the hearts of his congregation.

“Suppose any of you young men, who are here this morning, were going to be at home in the bosom of your family all day, and in the evening were going out to a party, where you would meet a lot of pretty girls. Then suppose some one brought you a buttonhole of lovely flowers, and made you promise *only* to wear it *once*. Now would you use that buttonhole at home and delight your mother and sisters, who do so much to make you happy, or would you put it on for the party, where you were going to meet all the pretty girls?”

While Antoinette Sterling was at his church, Dr. Beecher did all that he could to show his admiration for her singing, which always appealed to him in a very wonderful way. When he heard her give “O rest in the Lord” for the first time, he was so deeply affected, that he had to request her never to sing it again, as he found it impossible to preach afterwards, so strangely did her rendering of the music stir him.

The contralto used to sing from the gallery in the church, and was always to be seen there in the same seat, wearing a bunch of violets, her favourite flowers. Her place proved to be a somewhat draughty one; she therefore mentioned the fact to Dr. Beecher one day.

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He replied that he didn't *think* anything could be done, but would try his best to have it remedied. Next Sunday when she arrived and went up to her accustomed position, she found a sort of throne erected with a canopy hanging round it, so that she might never more be troubled by draughts. Her seat at once became known as the "Jewel Box," and was called by this name as long as it remained in the church. When eventually she resigned her post to go to England, Dr. Beecher gave orders that her chair should be kept vacant, and told a friend that he "lost a certain inspiration when Miss Sterling was no more seen at the accustomed spot."

At last the time came when the singer determined temporarily to abandon the position which she made in America, and see whether it might not be possible to make her way in England, where there seemed at that time a greater opening for musical talent. Mr. and Mrs. Huss were going over to London at the end of the year, and that decided her. She explained to Dr. Ward Beecher her reason for leaving New York, and one of her last appearances was made at the twenty-fifth anniversary of his preaching at the church.

The Christmas of 1872 arrived, and with it Antoinette Sterling set foot upon the vessel which was to carry her away from America across the ocean to a country in which unexpectedly she was to find a lasting home and a career far greater than she had ever dreamed of.

CHAPTER III

FIRST YEARS IN ENGLAND

WHEN Antoinette Sterling arrived in England at the beginning of 1873, she settled down in London and made it her home; nor, with the exception of a short tour with Theodore Thomas in the summer of this year, did she ever revisit her native land save upon two occasions. In spite of this, however, she remained throughout her life a staunch American to the very backbone. In her eyes every one and everything were perfection in her own country. If a London beggar who had been helped by her many times were discovered eventually to be a fraud (and this was not an altogether unusual occurrence), "It wouldn't have been so in America," she would declare. If anything went wrong during a concert tour, "Ah, they don't make mistakes like that where *I* was born." This high ideal was upheld as strongly after years of absence as on the day she first left her beloved country. Certain phrases picked up during childhood remained in her vocabulary ever afterwards. Rhubarb to her was invariably "pie-plant," and jam "preserve." She never referred to sweets, but would remark, "Say, let's get some candy." When the meat was "underdone," she used the expression "rare." Should any one in her presence speak

slightingly of the land of Stars and Stripes, woe betide them.

When first she set foot on this side, her mind was still filled with that dislike of the English race which one of her grandmothers had so carefully instilled. So much was this the case, that during her first months in London she felt an almost overmastering impulse to stand up and hiss the "illiterate National Anthem," as W. S. Gilbert has styled it, whenever she heard it played.

Arriving, then, with this love of everything American and dislike of everything British, it was strange that Antoinette Sterling should have taken up her permanent abode in London. Yet it was the case with her as with so many others of her nationality. What was more, she very soon grew to love England as much as she had previously hated it, and came to look upon it as a real home. Though still retaining her love of Jonathan and his independent spirit, and stoutly refusing to consider any question of naturalization, she grew to appreciate more and more those qualities which have made John Bull what he is. My mother never quite realized how attached to England she had become during these years, until in 1895 she spent some six months in the United States among her relatives and old friends. When she found herself in the once familiar surroundings, she looked on everything with the eyes of an outsider. To her it was not returning home again, but rather coming over on a visit which must soon terminate, as they would be wanting her back at her proper home. What specially impressed her in America as being so unlike what she had grown accustomed to in England, was the blank look in the faces of those who passed her in the

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street, the hotels, the theatres, the railway stations. How different from that other country, in which people so often recognized her, and had a smile of welcome for her! So many people seemed to have a sort of personal interest, a certain feeling of friendship for her, which is a little difficult to describe, as it was something quite apart from her popularity as a singer. When she returned from America she said that she seemed to have got out of touch with her earlier surroundings, and that nothing would induce her to reside anywhere but in London. This feeling she expressed very aptly in a little speech made at one of those "Thanksgiving Day" banquets which are annually held at the Hotel Cecil by the American Society. She had been taken there as a guest by Mrs. Morgan Richards, wife of one of the most prominent American men in London, and mother of one of the most gifted American women, Pearl Craigie, or, as she is better known perhaps, "John Oliver Hobbes." During the dinner they sat chatting in the gallery, for no ladies were allowed to partake of the feast: they were only permitted to watch the *men* eat.

The situation is a common one at banquets held in the metropolis. It seems to cry out for an adaptation of "The Three Fishers," under the title of—

"THE THREE DINERS"

Three husbands set off for a feed "down West,"

Off into the West, as the sun went down;
Each thought of the menu he loved the best:

(Their names were Robinson, Jones, and Brown).

For women may work, but men *must* eat,

And there's little to spend, and many to treat,

So it's not the least good moaning, moaning.

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Three wives sat up in the "Watchers' Tower,"
On the gallery seats, as the sun went down;
They looked at the diners for over an hour,
At specially Robinson, Jones, and Brown.
For women may watch, and men *can* eat!
The longer the dinner, the greater the treat,
Though the women-folk are moaning, moaning.

Three candles lay out on their shining stands
In the morning for Robinson, Jones, and Brown,
And the women were weeping and wringing their hands
For the men who had never come back from Town.
For men must drink, though women may weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep,
And good-bye to the "bars" and the moaning, moaning.

At the dinner in question the "American Society" husbands sat downstairs at the banqueting tables, eating, drinking, and being merry, while the American Society angels sat up aloft, looking on at the edifying spectacle. When the lords of creation had finally finished dinner and lighted their cigars, and the ladies of creation, who *hadn't* had any dinner, longed for cigarettes but were not offered any, the speech-making started. One of the speakers commenced in a particularly unconventional way: "Earlier in the evening you saw a Turkey stuffed with Sage. You now see a Sage stuffed with Turkey." After similar flashes of wit had been illuminating the scene for about half an hour, the American Ambassador sent up to the Ladies' Gallery to ask "whether Madame Sterling would favour them with a song."

The contralto had come quite unprepared for such a thing, and had been sitting in that atmosphere of food, drink, and smoke for upwards of an hour. It might

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have been known that under such adverse circumstances it was impossible for any one to sing properly. However, she could not well refuse, so rose from her seat, and without words, music, accompaniment, or even a chord to give her the key, started "Here's to the year that's awa'." At the end of the first verse her throat became parched. She stopped and coughed, thereby only making matters worse through getting more smoke into her lungs. She tried to struggle on again for a few bars, but at last had to give up the attempt, and make her apologies with these words: "My brothers, I have worshipped America for twenty years; I have lived in England for twenty years. America is my mother, but England is my grandmother, and I have lived so long with my grandmother that I seem somehow to have lost touch with my mother's sons, and I'm in too bad voice to sing. So you must forgive me."

When Antoinette Sterling arrived in London at the commencement of 1873, she brought with her an introduction to Sir Julius Benedict, who was a great force in the musical world at that time. They met and soon became great friends, though he could never quite get over her American temperament. It was so new. After a few weeks he asked whether she would like to make her *début* at the Covent Garden Concerts if he could arrange it. The answer was "Yes," but almost before he had a moment to turn round, lo and behold! he was told that the vocalist had vanished from London and had gone back to the States to tour with Theodore Thomas' Orchestra.

In the days when she had been singing at New York in Dr. Ward Beecher's church, she was introduced for

the first time to Dr. (in those days Mr.) W. H. Cummings. He was over there on tour, the other artists who made up the party being Edith Wynne, Mr. and Mrs. Patey, Charles Santley, and Lindsay Sloper.

When, therefore, Miss Sterling returned to London from the Orchestral Concerts, she went to see Mr. Cummings, feeling that he was one of her best friends on this side of the Atlantic, told him of the offer which had been made, and asked whether it would be wise to accept. The tenor answered in the negative, but in spite of this she called on Sir Julius. At first he was inclined to be angry at the way she had flitted off like a will-o'-the-wisp. He asked rather cynically whether she really *would* sing, or even promise to be in England if he procured her a date at the "Promenades." Her answer was apparently considered sufficiently reassuring for him to make a move in the matter, for a few days later a note arrived from him, "Will you sing on the evening of November Fifth?" Off she went once more to see Mr. Cummings, and again she was advised not to come out at these concerts. Her own inclinations, however, tended to an opposite opinion. Arriving home in a state of hopeless indecision, her Puritan up-bringing suggested a simple solution. She would seek for help from her Bible. On opening it, she saw staring her in the face the text, "Put not your trust in men." Her mind was instantly made up. A telegram was despatched with her answer, "Yes, I will sing."

When the engagement had thus been definitely accepted, she spent an evening with Sir Julius Benedict, Dannreuther, and Joseph Bennett, the ostensible reason for the confabulation being the settling of her pro-

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gramme for the Fifth. Instead of this, however, the whole time was given up to considering what was to be done about the question of costume. She flatly refused to wear a low-necked dress. The triumvirate answered that she *must*, as it was quite impossible for any one to appear on the platform in morning dress at an evening concert. Such a thing had never been heard of. After a little while, seeing that she was unflinching in her attitude, they began a discussion whether a gown could not be arranged with a square of pale pink satin at the neck to represent skin, so that it might at least assume a virtue if it had it not. They even commenced making working drawings, which showed such insight into the mysteries of millinery that, had they only persevered sufficiently, they might have ended by becoming serious rivals to Percy Anderson. But it was all to no purpose. Antoinette Sterling vetoed every suggestion, and said she would wear what she pleased. And she did. As a matter of fact, she did not even purchase a new dress for her *début*, but appeared in one which she had already worn over in New York.

A friend, by the way, once overheard some people commenting upon her not being properly gowned for the evening. Suddenly a plain-spoken man behind them burst out, "I wish to God *every* woman dressed like Miss Sterling."

People soon grew used to her wearing high-necked costumes, and her doing so brought little remonstrance, or even remark. On the contrary, it met with praise from many. One lady, who was an entire stranger, wrote a letter on the subject, expressing delight at her action.

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“DEAR MADAME,—As a woman and as a physician, I take the liberty of thanking you for the sensible, simple, and artistic manner in which you dress for the stage. You are the first professional singer of our sex to whom I have ever listened whose voice came forth unimpeded by muscular compression. The delightful ease with which you sang gratified me almost as much as the charm of your voice. With the memory of Madame—— so fresh in my mind, I am all the more prepared to express my delight at seeing that you do not bare your body, as so many do, to the gaze of an audience. I have always believed it possible for a professional singer or actress to educate the public up to a standard of decency instead of being herself dragged down to its level. It gives me great pleasure to know that you are so successfully demonstrating the possibility of my theory. Interested in all that women do well, and wishing you continued success, I am, very truly yours . . .”

Thus it came about that on 5 November, 1873, Antoinette Sterling made her début in England at Mons. Jules Rivièrè's Promenade Concert, under the conductorship of Sir Julius Benedict. In spite of the fact that the programmes were essentially popular, she insisted on giving something classical as her opening number, even at the risk, as many told her, of jeopardizing her success. True to her principles, she refused to sacrifice her own feeling as to what it was right to do on such a momentous occasion, merely for the sake of gaining applause for some claptrap sentimental ditty. Decided upon no half-measures, she went to Bach for her first piece, choosing the “Slumber Song” from the “Christmas Oratorio.” The effect which she made with this was extraordinary, and the applause, with which it was

received, deafening. On all sides the opinion was expressed that never had so successful a début been made in London. But all this was as nothing compared with the scene at the close of her song in the second part. It was Hullah's setting of "The Three Fishers." The excitement was overwhelming, terrific. People rose up and cheered on and on, as though they were never going to cease, waving hats and handkerchiefs wildly in the air all the while. The audience absolutely lost their heads over the new singer, who had come thus unheralded into their midst. They had expected to find a rough pebble, and instead had discovered a highly polished diamond of priceless worth. Next day all London realized that a new star had arisen in the musical firmament. In that one night her position had been made. How overpowering a success was obtained may be judged by the fact that an entrepreneur who came a few weeks later to book her for some concerts was met with the announcement that there were no vacant dates whatever until the end of the following summer. With her début the new contralto found herself besieged with offers for London and the provinces. After Christmas she made her first appearance at the Philharmonics, the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts, and the principal orchestral societies all over the country. In due course she was engaged for the Norwich and other festivals, and created the contralto rôle in Sir George Macfarren's oratorio "St. John the Baptist." At Messrs. Boosey's "Ballads," at St. James's Hall, such was her popularity that for upwards of twenty consecutive seasons she sang at every single concert.

In the spring of 1874 the seal of royal approval was

set upon her career, by the summons to appear before Queen Victoria. The whole story of this was characteristic of my mother's personality. When the official communication arrived that it would be Her Majesty's pleasure to hear Miss Sterling sing on 8 April, she looked up her diary, saw that she was booked for a concert on that date, and innocently wrote back that she was sorry to say she was already engaged for the evening in question, but would come the following week with pleasure, if that would be convenient. This naturally brought in post haste what in the Savoy operas used to be called a Lord High Everything Else. On being shown in, he almost collapsed into her arms from over-excitement and utter amazement at such unheard-of behaviour. He explained that when the Queen expressed a wish, it was practically a "command" and could not be refused. Antoinette Sterling replied that, having arrived in England so recently, she was new to the customs of the country, and that if it was a royal command, of course that made it different. Under such circumstances she would have been only too proud and happy to obey, had it been merely a case of giving up a concert fee. But—! There was a pause. The Lord High Everything Else rubbed his eyes and pinched whatever in so exalted a being is the equivalent of a leg, to see whether he was really awake. What was this extraordinary young person from America going to say next? But, she continued, it was not a case of fee at all; she had promised to *give her services* at a special benefit concert, and it would not be honourable to throw the committee over. The official raised his official equivalent for ordinary people's eyebrows, hemmed and

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hewed, cleared his Most Serene throat, and in a voice which strove to be calm, but trembled with suppressed emotion, expostulated : " But, my dear madam, don't you realize that it is a very great honour which is being conferred upon you, that—well, that other artists would give their eyes for such a favour ? Can't you see what an immense *éclat* it will give you in your professional career ? " " Yes, I know ; but it *wouldn't* be honourable on my part to break my promise, now *would* it ? However, I will write and ask whether they will let me off ! "

Next day the " Very Venerable Master of Ceremonies " heaved a sigh of relief on receiving a note to say that, the management having waived their rights, Miss Sterling would be able to appear. He promptly sent off for her guidance the list of ceremonials to be observed, and asked what she would sing. By return of post came a letter from the irrepressible young vocalist to say that with one of the rules which he had sent it was quite out of the question for her to comply. She had never worn a low-necked dress in her life, and being descended from the Quakers could not do so now. On the point she remained as firm as she had in the previous autumn, when it was discussed in reference to her *début*. This was more disturbing than ever, and to sanction such a thing was beyond the power of His Benignancy. The matter had to be laid before the Queen, who, with her usual graciousness, sent a message that she quite understood the position, and Miss Sterling might wear whatever dress she pleased. And so, after all this preambuling, the contralto appeared at Osborne, on 8 April, 1874, before Her Majesty and the Royal Family on Prince Leopold's birthday. The songs which

she chose for the occasion were Schubert's "Doppelgänger," "The Three Fishers," and "Don't be sorrowful," while the other artists who performed were Mr. Cusins and Herr Ludwig Strauss.

The closing incident in connexion with her visit was no less amusing than those which had led up to it. The Queen had been told that the singer, with her simple tastes, was averse to jewellery, but, in view of what has been already related in an earlier chapter, it was rather odd that the memento should have taken the form of a *tea*-set. My mother used laughingly to say that she felt quite angry about it, and had a good mind to return such a present, as being a distinct attempt on the part of the English Government to undermine her Republican principles by getting her in this way to take "tea," and so acknowledge ultimate defeat over the "Boston Tea-party." However, the nefarious attempt failed ignominiously, for the teapot, when actually being used by herself, never contained anything but chocolate. If her family and friends had tea from it, that was their affair, not hers.

When the American contralto set foot in England with the intention of making her *début* before the London public, she brought letters to some of the most influential musicians. Having always been devoted to the organ as an instrument, it was a source of great joy to her that these secured an introduction to several of the leading organists. Among them was Sir John Stainer, who had only just been transferred from Magdalen College, Oxford, to his important position at St. Paul's Cathedral. A genial man and an amusing host, he used at his own table to keep the guests in a

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perpetual state of mirth with his delightful fund of anecdote. Sir Joseph Barnby was another of her first friends in England. Then there was Sir George Martin, who, after being organist at Lambourn and Dalkeith, succeeded to the post at St. Paul's, which he holds at the present day, and Sir Frederick Bridge, who was at that time at Manchester Cathedral, but three years afterwards was appointed to Westminster Abbey, to which fact he owes the rather obvious sobriquet "Westminster Bridge." He has the reputation for being one of the wittiest men in the musical profession, and from the stories told of him he deserves it well.

One of his most sparkling effusions was provoked by a certain singer's son, who sought to follow in his father's footsteps. As if the mere fact of bearing so distinguished a name was not sufficient drawback, by provoking the audience to draw comparisons between the two generations, in which the younger was bound to suffer, he made the most terrible mistake of copying his father's general appearance and manner. This was the opportunity for the ever-ready humorist, and the following lines were the result :—

The Minstrel's boy to the concert's gone,
On the platform you will find him ;
His father's HAIR he has girded on,
But his VOICE he's left behind him.

Then there was Dr. Hopkins, organist at the Temple Church for no less than fifty-five consecutive years. The mention of Dr. Hopkins' name always used to induce the greatest merriment among the members of a certain cathedral choir, owing to an anthem which he

had composed, with the opening words, "I will wash." When the list of music to be performed during the week was found to include "'I will wash'—Hopkins," they fairly revelled in replying to any one who happened to ask what they were going to do, say, on the following Sunday morning, "Oh, haven't you heard? We're going to wash Hopkins." The phrase became so familiar that at last, among some of the choristers who were more bibulously inclined, it developed into a mere euphemism for "Let's have a drink." "Come on, old fellow, let's wash Hopkins."

"Oh, the noble army of organists!" my mother wrote in one of her letters; "self-sacrificing, self-effacing, patient, gifted, and hardworking. Glory be unto them, and blessings from the Father of all music! Of all instruments theirs is my favourite."

This intense admiration for the organ was well known to those of her friends who performed on that instrument. Whenever she was present at a church where one of them was officiating, the voluntary at the conclusion was sure to be prolonged far beyond its usual limits. Among others, Dr. Wood, the organist of Exeter Cathedral, made her a special promise that this should be done if ever she happened to be present at a service. Passing through Exeter on the way to Ilfracombe during her autumn tour, she remembered this and went down to the cathedral. The nave was reached just as the musician was playing the concluding bars which were to bring the service to an end. A message was despatched in haste to the organ-loft to announce her arrival. When the news reached him, Dr. Wood was actually playing the final "crescendo sostenuto," and

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those of the congregation who had remained were already rising to leave. Mindful of his promise, he held the chord, and improvised for a few seconds in order to lead on to another piece. After this, to the great satisfaction of the new-comer and to the amazement of the other listeners, he went on playing for another quarter of an hour.

A similar scene took place at Rev. Haweis' Chapel-at-Ease. One Sunday, when she was present, she sent up word to the organist, who was a special friend of hers. As a result, when any chance occurred for the use of the organ he took advantage of it, and introduced pianissimo improvisations at most unusual places. When the time came for Mr. Haweis to go over to the pulpit, the organist began to play. Instead, however, of the usual few bars, he continued for several minutes, paying no attention to the minister, who glared over in his direction, thunderstruck at such unwonted persistency. Little did any one guess who was the real cause of these strange delinquencies, though it was with difficulty that Madame Sterling suppressed a smile when she observed the astonished, almost indignant, look which came from the pulpit.

A clean-shaven man of intellectual appearance, Mr. Haweis used to be a rather pathetic sight as he limped across the church when a change of position was necessary. A good story was told of him, which, considering the shortness of his stature, bears a strong semblance of likelihood. The truth of it cannot be absolutely vouched for, but it is amusing, and at any rate *se non e vero, e ben trovato*. Once, when he had mounted the pulpit, he looked round impressively and gave out as his text :

"A little while, and ye shall not see me." Upon reaching these words, it is related that the stool on which he was standing suddenly collapsed. The preacher promptly disappeared from view, and a smothered voice from the hidden depths continued in querulous tones : "And then a little while, and ye *shall* see me." By this time he had found a friendly hassock, upon which he perched himself, and by means of its uplifting influence became once more visible to his congregation.

The mention of Mr. Haweis calls to mind an episode of which the hero was Thomas Hardy, the author of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles," "Jude the Obscure," and so many other well-known books. The characters in the drama were four. The names of two were the above, the remaining ones were Sarah Grand, the novelist, and Mrs. Haweis. The situation was complicated by the fact that Mme. Grand knew Mrs. Haweis but not the husband, while Hardy knew Haweis but didn't know the wife. This resulted in his unconsciously committing a fearful *faux pas*. The four were guests at a more or less literary afternoon party. In an unlucky moment Haweis came up to Hardy and said to him, "I hear Mme. Sarah Grand is present. I should so much like to meet her. Would you mind introducing me?" The other looked round for some moments, and at last caught sight of her talking to some lady in a far corner of the room. He therefore left his companion, and walked across, "Oh, I say, old Haweis wants to be introduced to you." Alas, Mme. Grand's *malheureuse c  telette* was Mrs. Haweis, who looked up in surprise at hearing her husband spoken of as "old Haweis" on the very threshold of her presence. But worse remained to

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follow, for he added in an apologetic tone, "I couldn't help it, really. If you think you'll be bored by him, I can easily make some excuse."

To return to the subject of organs and organists, my mother committed to paper a very beautiful description of her impressions, when she went to spend a Sunday at Eton during term-time, first singing for the boys in the afternoon at the College Chapel, and then going up later to St. George's at Windsor Castle to hear one of Sir Walter Parratt's recitals, if one may so call those quiet informal evenings of music which he delights to give for the benefit of the few specially favoured friends whom he invites to be present.

"I had gone down," she writes, "to hear one of the school concerts. Suddenly, in the interval between the two parts of the programme, a terrific applause began, and a request for me to do *my* share, and sing for the boys. I was quite taken by surprise, and had not the words of my songs with me. I always feel lost without my "Little Book," for words seem to flutter away like startled birds, while the music, like the brook, goes on for ever, and becomes a part of one, so that nothing could eliminate that portion of the song. Thus it was that I missed the honour and pleasure for the time being. To make up for it, however, I promised to come down again next time Dr. Harford Lloyd was giving one of his lovely organ recitals.

"In my gallery of memory is a picture of the chapel, filled with boys and masters and Eton folk, in the half twilight; Dr. Lloyd playing at my side high up in the organ loft; the chords deep, soft rise and fall in 'Crossing the Bar'; beneath me the long aisle

stretching up to the altar, and the large stained-glass window; all dim and dark, save for the few clustering candles that glimmered here and there among the pews; the speaking silence, and many a heart thinking of their beloved master, the Rev. Hale, who had a few days before passed away.

"After this I went with my kind host to hear Sir Walter Parratt play up at St. George's.

"Oh, the wonderful symphony of the calm, mysterious moonlight. Seated in the Windsor Chapel, where so many kings and queens had sat—with thoughts unknown; the stillness brooding over the listeners; the organ invisible, like the spirit of music spreading out its wings to cheer, to console, to lift up the hearts of men; the performer in the loft; the moonlit windows; the fading chapel in dim outlines, like a grey cloak covering it over; the living silence; the few beating hearts with bated breath; the organist not to be seen in the shadow; a small glimmering light to see or guess at the stops; a flood of music, whose rise and fall so strangely stirs the inmost soul; a few moments' reverie, a hushed blessing over all, whispered words—and the dream is over, but never to be forgotten. Then back through the quaint old street beneath the Castle walls, over the bridge which reaps so rich a harvest with its toll exacted from the long-suffering Etonians, and we are within the College bounds once more."

Antoinette Sterling always loved an organ-loft, and it was in an organ-loft that love was first awakened in her heart, when at a church in New York, upon an Easter Sunday, she met her future husband, John MacKinlay. My father was a talented amateur

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organist. He lived at Wappinger's Falls, and it was from the initial letters of this place that there was derived a name by which my mother often called him, "W. F." Being a man of private means, with much time on his hands, he used to play a great deal in the local church, and the appreciation which was bestowed upon his efforts was such that when one of the richest men of the district was asked to subscribe towards the cost of a new church organ, he replied, "I will pay for the entire organ myself, if you can make young MacKinlay undertake to play at the services for three years."

Soon after this my father had an organ fitted into the music-room of his own house at the Falls, and to celebrate the occasion he determined to give a musical reception to his friends. A description of his personality and mode of life is given in the next chapter, and it will be there seen how typical of his character is the following anecdote.

Determined to spare no trouble or expense in order to make the "At Home" a success, he engaged among others Sarasate and Miss Sterling.

The artists, after a long and tiring journey, arrived just in time for the reception. The evening passed off with the greatest success, and by the time the music was finished the performers were ravenously hungry. Their host at once came up and said, "I'm sure you must all be ready for some supper. Let us go into the dining-room, and see what they have prepared for us." Their faces brightened up considerably at the thoughts of food, and they followed him, anticipating a good square meal of something solid and satisfying. On

entering, they found awaiting them the most delightful and recherché repast imaginable. Dish after dish came in, everything exquisitely prepared and served, a supper of which the menu alone would have been enough to make an epicure's mouth water. But, alas ! Sarasate and the other performers were much too hungry to toy with a repast in which everything was so light and airy. With such appetites as theirs they would have much preferred a few pounds of steak as a *hors d'œuvre*, after which they would have appreciated the delicacies more.

One of the first presents which my mother received after becoming engaged was an Easter egg, within which reposed, on a bed of violets, an oblong-shaped signet ring. Upon it there was engraved the following bar of music :—



Herr - lich - ste.

The word itself, of course, signifies "Noblest." The intention of the notes is not at first quite so obvious. To make it clear, one must call to mind the fact that E flat is in the German notation known as *Es*. Hence the three notes A, E flat, G, become A.S.G., Antoinette Sterling.

It had been on Easter Sunday, that they first met, it was on Easter Sunday, in 1875, that they were married.

A few days beforehand, the bride-to-be went with a friend to make some arrangements about the service. When she entered the Savoy Chapel she could find no

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one about. At last, however, she saw a boy blowing the organ, as the organist was up in the loft having a practice. She asked where Rev. Henry White was, and the boy answered that he had just left, as service was over, but added that he lived quite close at hand. If it were not for the fact that he had to go on pumping, he could fetch him in five minutes. "Oh, well," the contralto at once answered, "I'll do that for you till you come back, if you'll run over for him." So off the boy went, leaving a substitute at whose identity the organist would have been considerably surprised had he known. As it was, he went on playing quite oblivious of any change, while Antoinette Sterling became for the nonce an organ-blower.

The wedding ceremony took place between Morning Prayer and the sermon. The secret had been well kept, and the congregation were fairly dumfounded when they saw the well-known contralto walking quietly up the church on the arm of George MacDonald, the great Scotch preacher and novelist, and then being calmly married before their very eyes. After the service the party drove off to Dr. MacDonald's house, where a wedding breakfast had been prepared. Then only did the singer begin to realize that she had made her final appearance before the public as "Miss" Antoinette Sterling.

CHAPTER IV

AT HER ZENITH

THE marriage of Antoinette Sterling brought with it an important change in her position. Previously to this her career may be said to have stood on a professional basis alone. To the social side she had been unable to give a thought, nor, as she had been placed, would much attention have been possible. Living hitherto in apartments, she had been full of engagements and endowed with a nature which was of itself unfitted for the making of calls, the answering of invitations, and similar duties. As to entertaining, such a thing had been out of the question. But now there came a great alteration. John MacKinlay was the ideal helpmate for one in her position. He forthwith took all responsibility and worry from her shoulders, and undertook the complete management of her affairs. Among concert givers and agents he soon became known as one of the best business men connected with the musical profession. Out of disorder he brought order. He answered all letters relating to her concert work, writing in most cases in her name. This brought much sorrow to autograph hunters, and often created confusion. Doubtless many collectors are still treasuring as mementoes of Antoinette Sterling various letters written in



John Mackinlay.

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a neat diminutive hand, which, in spite of bearing the famous signature, were entirely the work of her husband. In point of fact, several illustrated articles appeared containing what in the letterpress was stated to be a facsimile of the great contralto's writing, but by her own friends was at once recognized as the calligraphy of the more orderly member of the family. His devoted assistance did not end here. He would arrange the programmes for the different concerts, taking care that on a return visit to a town the same items should not be put down which had been given on the previous occasion. In addition to keeping for reference a record of her songs and encores at each engagement, he used to make a note of the dress worn by her, so that a change might be made in this as well as in the music. He would ever, while driving to a concert, talk upon congenial subjects, keeping away all that might ruffle her feelings, so that on arriving she might be in a happy frame of mind, and thus able to give her thoughts to the singing. While she was actually on the platform, he would generally be standing close at hand in the artists' room, singing the song under his breath. Who knows of what psychical assistance this may have been ! These were small things, it may be said, but they all helped towards the building up of what was in many ways a unique reputation.

Diplomatic, tactful, businesslike, a man of the world, with a wonderful memory for names and faces, distinguished in appearance, artistic, with fine musicianly feeling, theoretical knowledge, and skill in accompanying—whereby he could be of much help in the arranging and preparing of a song for public performance—quiet, gentle, and loving—such a man was John MacKinlay.

He had, moreover, a strong sense of humour, and was always fond of joking with those whom he liked. When his sister-in-law came to England on a visit, he was constantly poking fun at her with solemn face. She was extremely religious, and specially prided herself on her knowledge of the Bible. Knowing this he worried her one day for quite a time by asking, in the most serious way whether she could tell him where to find the text, "If the sheep have lost their shepherd, wherewithal shall they be salted?"

The contralto and her husband were in many ways of absolutely opposite natures. Any one might well have imagined that they could not possibly be suited to each other. Yet no happier marriage could well have taken place. Together they seemed to bring out the strong points and correct the weaker ones of the two characters, and the result was a great consolidation of Antoinette Sterling's powers and position.

Soon after they had moved into their new house in Stanhope Place, they received a visit from Monsieur Ch. Gounod. The composer of "Faust" had come over in connexion with his new oratorio "The Redemption," which was about to be brought out in London, and was to meet with a rather mixed reception, being dubbed by one of the critics, "Gounod's Chromatic Studies." When he called, he brought a letter of introduction from Pauline Viardot. After some conversation, Gounod asked whether Mme. Sterling would sing him something. With many apologies he was taken up to the drawing-room. It had only just emerged from the chaos of the decorator's hands, and was devoid of all furniture save the grand piano and a music stool. Her

husband sat down and accompanied, while she sang "The Better Land"—not her visitor's setting of the words, but that of Dr. Frederic Cowen, with which her name was so closely associated. When the last notes had died away, Gounod came forward and kissed both her hands, saying that he had heard every voice of any repute throughout the whole world, but that *this* one was unique. It was the prelude to many meetings, and to a good deal of correspondence in connexion with "The Arrow and the Song," and other music, for the bringing out of which she was anxious to make arrangements. What was not a little curious, his letters to her were written sometimes in English, sometimes in French.

The piano, which was the sole piece of furniture in the drawing-room when the French composer first called, had only arrived a few days previously. It came as a present from William Steinway, who had been one of her earliest friends in the days when she was beginning her studies in New York. Mr. Steinway, who was the founder of the great American firm of pianoforte makers, had come to England upon business. Soon after his arrival he had gone one afternoon to hear her sing at the Albert Hall. The rendering of the "Three Fishers" which she gave so touched him that he arose and left the concert immediately it was at an end, saying that after the thrilling effect produced by her song, he felt he did not care to hear any other vocalist that day. Next morning, much to her astonishment, one of Steinway's vans drove up to the door. A representative of the firm informed the servant that he had brought a concert-grand piano, a gift from the manager to Madame

28 June / 83 -

Dear Mrs Sterling

Just as I received your letter, I was looking at a song which, I think, would equally suit your voice and feeling, and the words of which are to be found in the celebrated Selection.

" One thousand and one
 years "

page 509. The title
is: The arrow and the
"Song." Will you be
so kind to read it
and let me know
whether you agree with
the piece or not.

Yours very truly

Ch. Gounod

FACSIMILE LETTER WRITTEN BY CH. GOUNOD
TO ANTOINETTE STERLING

ANTOINETTE STERLING AND OTHER CELEBRITIES

Sterling. It happened that the donor himself was expected to lunch that day. On arriving, he said that he hoped she liked the "little present" which he had sent, adding that he had specially picked it out himself. When in due course the drawing-room came to receive its furniture, it was found that the piano was too large for the space available, and at her request he sent a semi-grand in place of the original one. Mr. Steinway once told a mutual friend that the voice of Antoinette Sterling had in it "a rarity of quality which could only be fully appreciated by one whose ear had been trained by piano tuning."

In England the contralto's name was so long associated with ballad singing, that a large percentage of the public are quite ignorant of the fact that, at the commencement of her career, almost her entire attention was devoted to classical music, and more especially to German songs. Not only this, but she was the first to introduce groups of Lieder at recitals in America. The following programme may therefore be of interest as having been given by her early in the seventies, in the hall built by this same Mr. Steinway in New York. It was during the only visit paid by her to America in company with her husband.

Overture to Leonora, No. 1		<i>Beethoven</i>
Prelude, Choral and Fugue		<i>Bach</i>
Recitative	"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee"	} <i>Macfarren</i>
Trio	"This My Beloved Son"	
Aria	"In the Beginning was the Word"	
(From the new oratorio "St. John the Baptist.")		
MME. ANTOINETTE STERLING.		
Romanze for Violin, op. 42		<i>Max Bruch</i>
MR. S. E. JACOBSON.		

AT HER ZENITH

Song	"When the Tide comes in"	
	(Expressly composed for MME. ANTOINETTE STERLING.)	
Ballet Music	"Dance of the Bayaderes" "Torchlight Dance of the Cashmere Brides" "Second Bayaderes Dance" "Wedding Procession" (From the opera "Feramors.")	Rubinstein
INTERMISSION		
Overture	"Euryanthe"	Weber
	"Wonne der Wehmuth" . .	Beethoven
	"Der Wachtelschlag" . .	Schubert
	"Wenn ich früh in den Garten geh"	Schumann
Lieder .	"Sei Still"	Joachim Raff
	"Neue Liebe"	Mendelssohn
	"Es muss ein Wanderbares sein"	F. Liszt
	"Gelb rollt mir zu Füßen" .	Rubinstein
MME. STERLING.		
Symphonic Poem	"Omphale's Spinning Wheel"	Saint Saëns
Scotch Song	"Caller Herrin'"	
MME. STERLING.		
Huldigungs March		Wagner

In her devotion to German songs, Antoinette Sterling was about twenty years in advance of the times. After her studies on the Continent, she had returned to New York at the close of the sixties a perfect monomaniac on German music. She delighted to sing Schumann's "Dichterliebe" and "Frauenliebe" cycles at her recitals, and used to put down groups of three or four Lieder at miscellaneous concerts with the greatest equanimity, while the critics raged furiously, and execrated her for introducing such songs. One of the American papers was particularly amusing on the subject.

"Miss Sterling was educated musically in Germany," the critique runs, "and acquired there a taste for German songs, especially of a dramatic character. These she has sought to make popular with the American public. We suppose we must admit that the taste of a mixed audience is not up to this class of songs. Those which Miss Sterling particularly favoured were very short, and it took three to make a unit, not to say an unique performance. They stood *A, B, C*, on the programme. As the audience did not understand German, there was an uncertainty as to when '*A*' ended and '*B*' began, and it was not until '*C*' closed with her bow that her hearers took in the situation, and applauded her really heroic devotion to high art."

"But," asks one, "do not people rave over Italian music, though they do not comprehend the words? Yes, to be sure: first, because it is the fashion; and second, because the less one hears of the libretto the better; or rather, to be serious, the Italian style is commonly florid, and the artistic execution pleases the ear. We wouldn't like a canary's singing any better if we *did* hear the words; but a poll parrot, whose style is massive, must articulate plainly to be at all appreciated."

Miss Sterling's friends exhorted her to give up the Lieder and take to English songs interspersed with an occasional Italian aria, which the public did not object to so much. If she must give the music of German composers, let her sing translations. But this she would not do under any circumstances. "Why," she used to ask, "do they distort the title of Schumann's immortal '*Ich grolle nicht*,' and write '*I will not grieve*'? '*Grieve*' is not at all the right word to express '*grolle*.' No one should ever dare to sing translations. In them everything is changed—the phrasing, the poetic feeling, the form, and even the truth of the sense. '*Auf*

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wiedersehen,' (To meet again), is translated 'Good-bye for ever'; and for 'Dort wo du nicht bist, Dort ist dein Glück,' they put 'Thy happiness is in the grave.' Possibly happiness *may* be in that gruesome spot. Wherever it is, it is certainly not in the translation. The anglicizers of German songs always seem to me to be 'the demon washerwomen,' or washermen in most cases, of English music. They look on the German songs as very finely worked, but dirty. So they put them into the mangle and bring them out white in their version. But, like too many laundresses, they rend them in pieces, too often past all recognition, before they make them 'quite English, you know.' For my part, I call it illiterate and wicked (and it should be criminal), as well as insulting to the poet and to the composer who set the words to music."

The suffering which she had gone through in the cause of her beloved German music was more than atoned for in her eyes by the meeting which she had with Franz Liszt, whose compositions it had ever been her special delight to sing. In after years she always remembered the occasion with pleasure, and delighted to recall it. She used to speak of the great pianist as a tall, slight man with deep-set eyes and shaggy brows. His hair was white and parted in the middle. The hands were narrow, the fingers long and slender. He wore an Abbé's coat, and in all that he said or did there was a courtly elegance and polish of manner which made one feel somehow as if he must be some monarch. And indeed he *was* one, being at that time practically the king of pianists. A Hungarian by birth, like so many of the great musicians, he had first appeared before

the public at the age of nine. Afterwards he went to study in Paris, and played there. When he was twenty he heard Paganini, and was at once possessed with the determination to become the Paganini of the piano. At the height of his popularity he retired to Weimar, to compose and teach, and the town was soon the musical centre of Germany. Later he was received into minor orders in the Church of Rome, and became known as Abbé. Twenty years after this, when he was seventy-five years old, he came to England for the last time. His visit to London was a triumphal progress. Thousands flocked to get a mere sight of him.

Shortly before he was due to return to the Continent the Baroness Burdett-Coutts gave in his honour a most distinguished luncheon party, followed by an enormous reception. Antoinette Sterling was chosen to be the minstrel of the occasion. The maestro had stipulated that he was not to be asked to touch or even to look upon a piano. He had given his last concert and was leaving England in two days.

"After we left the luncheon table," my mother writes, "we passed to the drawing-room. A piano was standing there, open and waiting. Liszt was told that I was to sing one or two of his songs, and at once asked to see what had been chosen. The first one was 'Der Koenig in Thule,' and as I sang he sat close beside the piano. At the end he put his head back and murmured, 'Ach Gott! Ach Gott!'"

"The next morning, his last day in England, there came a letter asking us to dine in the evening with Mr. Littleton, at whose house he was staying. A postscript added that the Abbé was most anxious to hear me sing

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again before he left. After dinner, Liszt asked who was to play for me. I *should* have answered, 'You, Abbé, if you will do me the honour,' but I did not like to impose upon him, so Mr. Coenen undertook the accompaniments. After I had sung twice, the great composer sat down and played—how, none may forget who listened. Then he asked me to sing the 'King of Thule' once again. When I had done so he improvised more divinely even than before, and said many sweet things to me. Next day he left, and died soon afterwards at Bayreuth."

Some years before meeting Liszt, Antoinette Sterling had sung to the accompaniment of the other great pianist of that time, Anton Rubinstein. It was on the occasion of his visit to America. She was taken to one of his concerts in New York by a Mrs. Pearsall. "This lady," my mother writes, "was a friend of the wonderful musician, and at the end of the recital he came back with us to supper. When he had eaten endless oysters, and smoked countless cigarettes, he asked me to sing, and sat down at the piano. After the song he stopped, looked at me, and remarked with a smile, 'Sie haben nie geliebt' (You have never loved), adding that I had no heart.

"I shall never forget his playing. Liszt was tremendous—wild, passionate—but not so single-minded as Rubinstein. *There* was a giant, a monumental soul carved out of granite. He was a great man, lofty and powerful. He had something to say to the world, and he said it in music. But he was not exclusively a musician—he was educated, cultivated, and well read. In all his playing he displayed the most extraordinary power and

abandon. To watch him gave the impression that difficulties were simply non-existent. It was as though he were just amusing himself with the piano, and could do whatever he liked with it."

The home of Antoinette Sterling was well known in artistic circles. Her husband was able to give free scope to his taste and feeling for colour in the decorating and furnishing of the house. It soon became something after the nature of a museum. The dining-room was panelled in oak, and furnished *en suite*. The mantelpiece, which was of the same wood, contained a large slab of onyx. Near it stood a carved oak chest of the fifteenth century with a curious inscription. From the ceiling was suspended a chandelier which had belonged to Dante Rossetti. On the floor lay a large Oriental carpet, hundreds of years old, on part of which were woven some verses from the Koran, while the curtains were made from red velvet of the sixteenth century.

The hall and landing were of inlaid mosaic: the staircase was hung with old French prints. The double drawing-room, with its yellow tapestry walls, parquet floor, mahogany doors, and a finely decorated ceiling, was filled with treasures of every kind. A large Cassone, or wedding chest, had a picture panel in front executed by one of the old Italian colourists, while upon the two ends were painted the arms of the family for which it had been originally made. A huge Chinese curtain of yellow embroidery, said to have hung at one time in the bedchamber of the Emperor, divided the two rooms. The chairs were of the best French periods, while there were many antique cabinets of the finest workmanship, cushions from the famous

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"Peacock room" designed by Whistler, a clock belonging to Napoleon, and a set of silver dessert knives and forks of exquisite design, surmounted by the imperial arms of Russia, which had once belonged to Peter the Great. These few words of description will give some idea of Antoinette Sterling's home.

Musicians one would naturally expect to see at the house, but painting, literature, drama, science, and the law were equally represented, for her tastes were catholic. Philanthropists and the more broad-minded members of the Church were equally welcome. Politics alone were unrepresented save on rare occasions. The circle which they gathered round them was in some respects almost unique. It was consequently the writer's very great privilege to be introduced to many of those who were of world-wide fame for their artistic powers and intellect. This resulted in rather exceptional opportunities for hearing anecdotes concerning the various celebrities, the stories coming in each case either from their own lips direct, or from those of their intimate friends. That it has been ever a habit to jot down the more interesting of these must be made the excuse for daring, while still on the right side of thirty (or one should perhaps term it the *wrong* side, seeing that it connotes the green callowness of youth), to embark upon a book which it is considered unusual, and indeed hardly respectable, to undertake until one has placed some sixty summers to one's credit.

Perhaps the best impression of Antoinette Sterling's surroundings may be obtained from the mention of her friends. Reference will be made in later chapters to the singers and instrumentalists with whom she so con-

stantly appeared upon the concert platform. Naturally those composers with whose songs her name was associated were more or less frequent visitors at the house—Stephen Adams, A. H. Behrend, Jacques Blumenthal, Dr. Cowen, Alfred Scott Gatty, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Constance Maud, Frank Moir, J. L. Molloy, Sir Arthur Sullivan, and Hope Temple, who married André Messenger, of *Véronique* fame.

Mr. Molloy spent, perhaps, more time at her home than any other. Few people realize the immense pains taken over some songs to make them a success. He would spend hours, almost days at the house, trying over little alterations of melody or accompaniment, when a new ballad was being made ready for its final launching at the St. James's Hall. But all the unsparing trouble which was taken brought its result in such successes as "Love's Old Sweet Song," "Home, Dearie, Home," "We'll Keep the Old Grey Mare, John," "The Clang of the Wooden Shoon," and "Darby and Joan." Of the latter my mother used to recall a humorous incident. When, after singing it, she had gone off the platform, and returned again to bow her acknowledgment, she found the audience roaring with laughter, and gazing up at the gallery. She turned her eyes in the same direction, and saw two people seated in the centre of the front row, each of whom had lost an arm. In the excitement of the moment they had joined forces, and were vigorously clapping their two remaining hands together.

Her handwriting was ever a source of wonderment to Mr. Molloy. Soon after her English début he wrote plaintively in one of his letters: "Oh, Miss Sterling,

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ISN'T your writing hard to make out! However, after a header in the sea, and a sharp run over Beachy Head, I did it." It was doubtful whether even after twenty years of corresponding he really succeeded in deciphering her notes with any great freedom. In her letters it always seemed as though "true ease in reading came by chance, not art."

One of his visits to the house had a sudden and terrible termination. They were sitting in the dining-room, so my mother said, when suddenly loud shouts were heard at the end of the street. These were quickly followed by the wild clatter of hoofs. "It must be a horse running away." They jumped up, went to the front door, and looked out. A cab was careering wildly by, rocking from side to side, grazing the lamp-posts, and seeming as though it must be smashed up every moment. A lady was inside. As she passed, they caught sight of her face. With a cry of horror, Mr. Molloy set off in pursuit. "Good God, it's my wife!" Luckily the incident did not have a fatal termination, but one can imagine what must have been his feelings, when he recognized who it was that was in such danger.

It is not intended to do more than mention a few names, more or less at haphazard, in order to give a general idea of the large circle of her friends. One must, therefore, hope to be pardoned for any of those obvious "sins of omission" which are bound to occur. The latter phrase, by the way, was rather naïvely explained in the following words by a certain youth who was answering an examination paper: "Sins of omission are sins which we forget to commit."

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Among the painters, Antoinette Sterling was proud to know such men as Hubert Herkomer, for whom many times she sang at Bushey, Holman Hunt, Colin Hunter, Leighton, MacWhirter, Orchardson, Val Prinsep, Sir William Richmond, Briton Rivière, Marcus Stone, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, and G. F. Watts. Her friends upon the stage included George Alexander, Mary Anderson, the Bancrofts, Wilson Barrett, Edwin Booth, Arthur Cecil, Forbes Robertson, George Grossmith, Sir Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, the Kendals, Cyril Maude, Ada Rehan, Edward Terry, J. L. Toole, Beer-bohm Tree, Geneviève Ward, and Sir Charles Wyndham. Literature was represented by Sir Edwin Arnold, Mrs. Craik (authoress of "John Halifax, Gentleman"), Bret Harte, Jean Ingelow, Charles Kingsley, George MacDonald, Whitcomb Riley, and Lord Tennyson ; while among the staff of "Punch" she claimed the friendship of Arthur à Beckett, George du Maurier, Harry Furniss, Henry Lucy, Linley Sambourne, Sir John Tenniel, and Sir Francis Burnand. Of the letters which the last named penned to her one was especially amusing, in which he referred to a note left behind on the table in his office. The place was closed for Whitsuntide, and consequently, he remarked, it was in a very (Whits-) untidy state.

Another literary friend, Miss Marie Corelli, has very kindly sent the following description of her impressions upon first hearing the contralto sing :—

"I first heard Madame Antoinette Sterling at St. James's Hall. I was only a girl, and my first book, 'A Romance of Two Worlds,' was in process of being written. I was extremely emotional and impulsive—always ready to

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admire and appreciate the talent or the genius of gifted men and women, and was then, as I am now, a passionate lover of music. I shall never forget the impression Madame Sterling's voice made upon me in 'The Lost Chord' and 'Caller Herrin'.' I have heard the wonderful Clara Butt many times since, but, though I love and admire her voice also, there was something in Antoinette Sterling's rendering of a ballad that went to the heart more quickly. I think I preferred her singing of 'Caller Herrin' even to 'The Lost Chord.' Perhaps I was more touched by it because Dr. Charles Mackay, who adopted me as a daughter, had taught me to love all the Scottish ballads, and was never better pleased than when I sang them to him. 'Caller Herrin'' was an especial favourite of his, and I eagerly followed every note and every word of Madame Sterling's rendering of it, that I might perhaps learn from her to sing it better. The lines—

Wha'll buy caller herrin'?
O ye may call them vulgar farin'—
Wives an' mithers maist despairin'
Ca' them lives o' men,

were those which she rendered, to my mind, with supremest pathos. It was difficult to keep tears from the eyes while listening to them. After the concert I was taken into the 'artistes' room' to shake hands with her, and when I murmured something which was no doubt very weak and ineffectual about the delight her singing had given me, I am glad to remember that she bent forward and kissed me in the kindest way. 'And do you sing?' she asked. 'A little,' I admitted. 'That's right!' she said; "you look as if you sang.

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The old ballads are always best to sing—but you must have a loving heart to sing them. The *heart* is the secret of their power! I have often thought of these words, for they were especially true in her case. She sang with her whole *heart* in the singing.”

Among those special friends who were not immediately connected either with music, painting, the stage, or literature, were Lord and Lady Mount Temple, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Lady Aberdeen, Lady Ashburton, Lady Battersea, Lady Rothschild, Lady Henry Somerset, Sir Sydney Waterlow, Edward Clifford (of the Church Army), and Miss Frances Willard. All of these were similarly interested with herself in various philanthropic objects. Out of the Church dignitaries, she was specially in touch with such men as Canon Duckworth, Dean Farrar, Canon Fleming, the Rev. Newman Hall, the Rev. Haweis, Dr. Parker, Archdeacon Sinclair, Dr. Welldon, and Archdeacon Wilberforce. But of all her interests none was keener than that which she displayed in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Nothing pleased her more than to read books upon natural history, astronomy, geology, and other branches of science, whilst for years she was a member of the Royal Institution, where she would attend lectures whenever she could make time.

Sir James and Lady Dewar she always looked on as two of her nearest and most intimate friends, and it was in their flat, above the Royal Institution, that she made the acquaintance of most of the leading scientists. When she attended for the first time one of the lectures given by “Professor” Dewar, as he then was, she was unfortunate enough to get there late. The lecturer

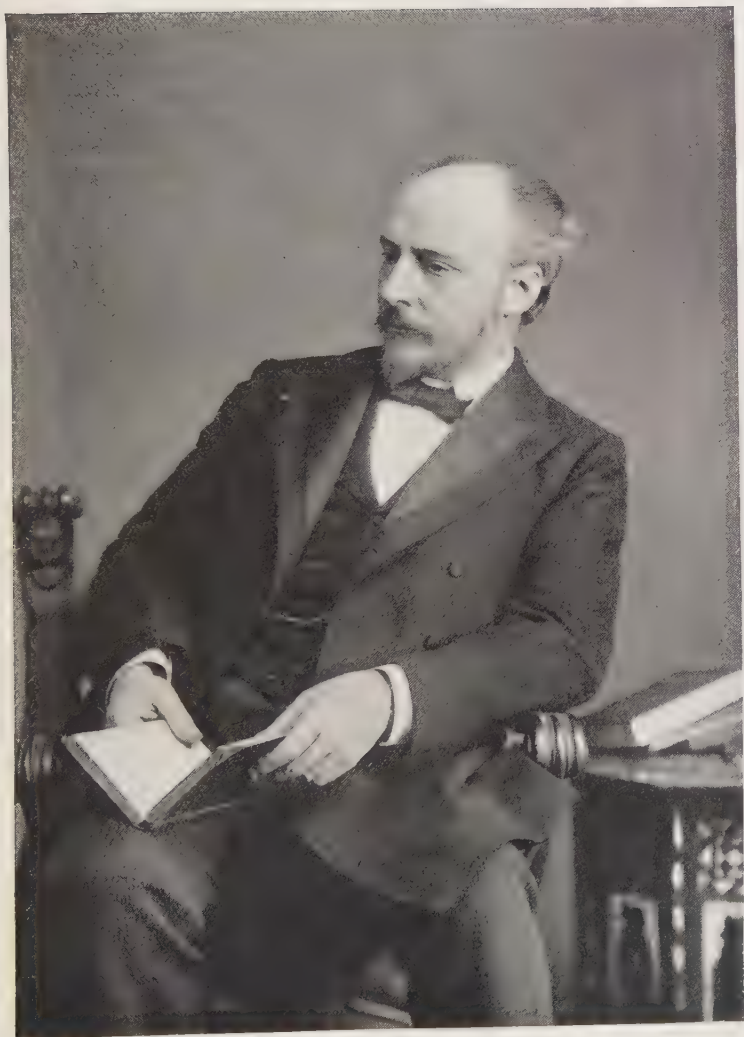


Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

James Dewar

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noticed her tardy arrival, and saw the look of disappointment on her face at having missed the opening experiment. Consequently, when the audience was dismissed, he asked her to stay behind, and repeated it for her special benefit.

In conversing with Sir James, one is at once struck with his broad views and interests. He is apparently no less devoted to the Arts than to the Sciences. Certainly his home life would seem to bear out the view. The flat in Albemarle Street is one of the most capacious in London, and from end to end bears witness to the artistic tastes of Lady Dewar and her husband. The walls are hung with old tapestries, rich embroideries and the most wonderful coloured prints, while the floors are covered by lovely rugs. On all sides are carved cabinets, inlaid tables, old French brocaded chairs of exquisite design, and a wealth of china, glass, enamels, painted fans, antique silver, ivory netsukes, and other *Objets d'Arts*.

It is in these artistic surroundings that Sir James receives his friends at the termination of the lectures in the famous series, delivered on Friday evenings each spring. These lectures are not open to the general public, but are confined to the members and their friends. The latter come armed with the small yellow tickets of invitation, obtainable through the members alone. The proceedings always commence punctually at nine and end at ten, or a few minutes later. The audience begin to arrive at about eight o'clock, evening dress being *de rigueur*. Some time is spent in the library, where many photographs and other objects of scientific interest are displayed, after which adjournment is made

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to the lecture room. The popularity of the lecturer can be usually gauged by the time which members spend in the library before going to secure seats. They vary in inverse ratio.

The seating is arranged somewhat on the plan of a Greek theatre. Down in the body of the hall stands the lecturer. Before him is a large sort of counter on which are placed a maze of tubes, glasses, and other impedimenta necessary for the experiments which he may propose to give. Behind him is a blank wall on which hang large charts, illustrative of certain facts which he wishes to keep before the minds of his hearers. On a level with him are the places reserved for the Council of the Institution and any specially invited guests. To the rear of these are erected some nine rows of seats, rising tier on tier, in semicircles of ever increasing circumference. Immediately in front of the lecturer, under the gallery, there is placed a large and powerful lantern, from which are thrown on to the back wall any photographs which are to be displayed. The four or five rows of seats nearest to the front are reserved for members, but these are thrown open without restriction ten minutes before the lecture is due to commence. At twelve minutes to the hour people become restless, and eyes turn to the clock, which is in the middle of the gallery tier. As soon as the hand reaches the appointed spot on the dial, there is a general obstacle race over the backs of the seats into the vacant places below. A couple of minutes after this the Council make their appearance, escorting their good ladies,—“that is, assumin’ that they’ve got any,” as the Sentry sings in “Iolanthe.” Finally, punctually at the hour, amid

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clapping and stamping of feet the proceedings are opened.

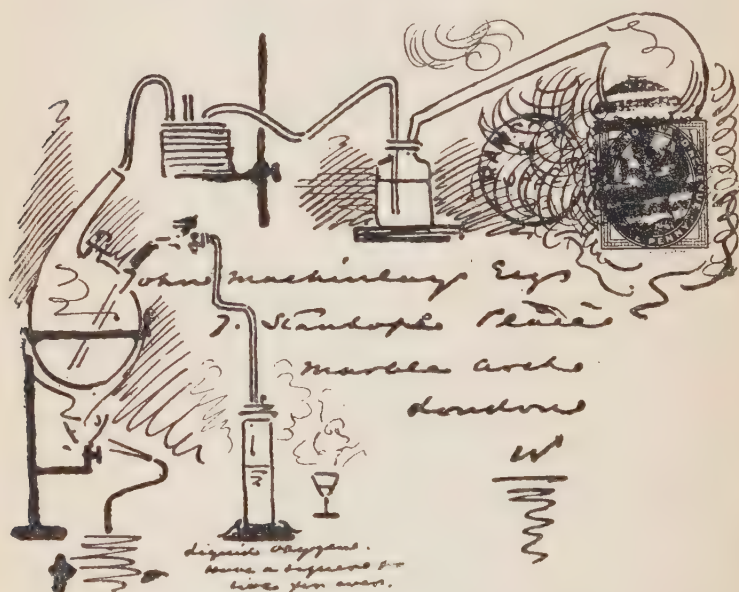
The audience which attend upon these Friday evenings are highly intellectual, and a professor would deem himself lucky if he could always meet with such. Unhappily he does not do so. A case in point was the experience which once happened to Professor Huxley. He was delivering a discourse upon "The Brain," and soon saw that it was quite above that of his audience. Their faces wore a look of utter bewilderment and lack of comprehension. One lady alone seemed to show signs of understanding. Consequently he addressed the whole of his remarks to her, utterly ignoring the rest. He was delighted to observe that she stayed behind afterwards, as though hesitating whether to speak or not. "My dear madam, can I be of any service? Is there perhaps some point which you would like me to explain?" asked Huxley, with an encouraging smile. "Oh, thank you, Professor, if you would be so kind. I couldn't quite make out one thing. Is the cerebellum inside or outside the skull?"

Nearly as bad was the experience of Hubert von Herkomer, when lecturing at Oxford to some sweet lady undergraduates. He had given an eloquent disquisition upon painting, explaining various intricacies connected with the subject, the treatment of atmosphere, and the obtaining of special effects. He concluded his speech by inquiring whether his audience would like to ask any questions, and was met with the idiotic reply: "Would you please tell me the best way to clean the palette?"

That is not at all the sort of thing which happens at

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the Royal Institution, where the gatherings are indeed notable. Attractions such as Marconi on Wireless Telegraphy, the first lectures upon new discoveries such as helium and radium, or the opening of the Davy Faraday Research Laboratory, founded and endowed by Dr. Ludwig Mond, brought together some of the most intellectually brilliant assemblies which have probably



ever met within the precincts of the Institution. But no Friday evenings ever caused greater excitement than those at which Sir James Dewar submitted his investigations in the properties of matter at the lowest temperature. At these he gave the first public experiments in the liquefaction of oxygen, and later on, which seemed still more wonderful, in the solidification of hydrogen. To the lecture on Liquid Oxygen Antoinette Sterling

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took Mr. Linley Sambourne, the well-known artist on the staff of "Punch." Next day a letter of thanks was received, enclosed in an envelope on which the address was almost hidden away amid drawings of retorts, filled with what was labelled "Liquid Air," and a number of kindred vessels and instruments of various kinds.

By the way, Mr. Sambourne related a curious incident one evening at his house in Kensington. We had left the dinner-table, passed up the staircase, where there hung a number of originals of his most famous cartoons, to the drawing-room. It is a characteristic room, which bears eloquent testimony to the owner's fondness for old furniture and china, but especially for antique bronzes, of which he has some very beautiful specimens. Conversation had turned to the question of memory, and of the tricks which it is sometimes known to play. "That reminds me," said the distinguished draughtsman, "of something that was told me the other day by Ravenhill, with whose drawings you are, of course, acquainted. He went out to the Indian Durbar to obtain some material for 'Punch.' While in camp there he met with an accident, being thrown from his horse and picked up insensible. When he came to himself he was completely dazed, and could not say anything intelligible. Those who were standing around him asked what his name was, and where they were to take him. He could only vaguely shake his head. After a minute or two, he collected his wits sufficiently to ask for pencil and paper. With them he made a rough sketch of the camp, indicating the part in which he was quartered, and guided by this they were soon able to bring him in safety to his friends.

ANTOINETTE STERLING AND OTHER CELEBRITIES

To return to the Royal Institution lectures, Antoinette Sterling, as has already been stated, made a great many friends in scientific circles through her constant visits to Lady Dewar's flat. Among these were Sir Frederick Abel; Professor Ayrton and his wife, herself a brilliant scientist and the only woman member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers; Sir Benjamin Baker, a keen river enthusiast, who used often to take her for long boating excursions up the Thames; Sir Robert Ball, learned in the study of the heavens; Sir Frederick Bramwell; Sir William Crookes, famed in chemistry; Sir Donald Currie, Sir William Huggins and Lady Huggins, who is herself a notable astronomer, and has joined in so many of her husband's labours at their own observatory; Sir Hiram Maxim, Lord Rayleigh, and the electrical experts Sir Joseph Swan and Professor Silvanus Thompson.

The mention of the two last names recalls the story of a certain Professor who was celebrated equally for his work in electricity and his bluntness in conversation. He was asked to dinner by a titled lady, who at great expense had just completed a tremendous installation of electric light. All around were magnificent fittings, holding clusters of lamps of appallingly strong candle power. The hostess was very proud of this illumination, and was anxious to get a few words of praise out of the great man. "What do you think of our electric lighting?" she asked in insinuating tones. The answer was very much to the point, though not quite what she had anticipated. "I will give you six months, madame, for the whole household to become stone blind."

He evidently knew what he was talking about, which

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was more than did a certain painter whom Antoinette Sterling met at Colin Hunter's house. Unhappily, the gentleman in question did not recognize her identity under the name of Mrs. MacKinlay, and the result was distinctly humorous.

The Scotch R.A. was giving a dinner party, at which she was present. During the evening she brought out her little book containing the words of her songs, made a sign to her husband, and, with a smile, said she was going to sing something. After the first song Colin Hunter came up to thank her. Close by was standing another well-known Scotch artist, whom we will call Mac "X," since in the story he is to remain—like the amount of whisky a Scotchman can take—an unknown quantity. The host at once said, "Let me introduce Mr. Mac X. to you, Mrs. MacKinlay. I know how much you admire his paintings." Mac X. took up the piece of music, which was still lying on the piano. "Ah, yes, I'm so fond of 'Darby and Joan.' Have you ever heard Antoinette Sterling sing it, Mrs. MacKinlay?" The contralto replied in the affirmative, but lay low, after the manner of Brer Fox, without disclosing her identity, to see what would follow.

"Have you really?" he continued. "I never have. I should like to do so very much. I'm told she has an absolutely natural voice, and *never had a lesson in her life.*"

"I've often *heard* so myself," said the singer, with truth, but at the same time with the intention of egging him on to commit himself still further on the subject.

"And what is more," he added, "I'm told that she has to be taught all her songs like a parrot." Giving a little side glance at Colin Hunter, who was standing by

highly amused, she responded, "Oh, well, I don't suppose she knows a note of music, anyway."

The shoe was, however, very much on the other foot when Madame Sterling was dining at the house of her oldest friend among the artists, Briton Rivière, whose son, Hugh Rivière, is one of the coming portrait painters, his sitters having already included such men as Sir Squire Bancroft, Henry Arthur Jones, and the Bishop of Ripon. Her neighbour at table proved to be extraordinarily well informed upon every topic. Literature, art, science, religion were all discussed in turn. Upon each subject the mysterious unknown proved himself an equally brilliant conversationalist, full of new and interesting information. While listening, she got what Lewis Carroll called "curiouser and curiouser" as to what his profession could possibly be, seeing that he was possessed of this fund of all-round knowledge. At last curiosity prevailed. "Say, what are you?" The harmless question was hailed with delight by all. Amid general amusement, the host made himself sponsor for the occasion. "Oh, it's really not worth while listening to his idle chatter. He's nobody in particular, and doesn't know what he's talking about." "Well, but who is he, anyway?" "Why, he's only the Editor of 'The Times.'"

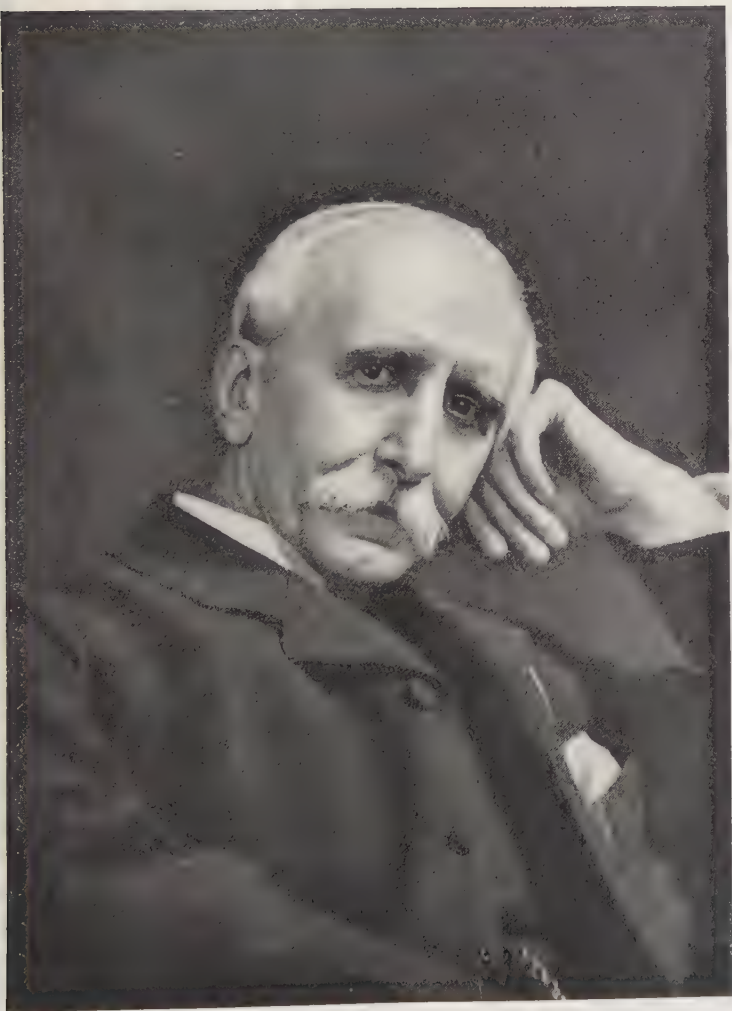


Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

Bruton Siviere

CHAPTER V

HER SONGS AND SINGING

“**M**ORE Heart and less Art.”

This was what Antoinette Sterling was always preaching to those who came to seek advice as to how they might win greater success as vocalists. It was only another way of urging others to strive for that same “simplicity” which was the predominating feature of her own life.

“Many artists,” she wrote, “are so occupied with their *manner* of singing, that at last they have nothing left but manner, with neither mind nor soul behind. Singing is nothing but using the breath properly. Let them learn to breathe and to think. Let them educate their minds and their hearts, instead of incessantly tantalizing their vocal chords. The singing will come easily enough then.

“I think there will be a reaction from the modern pre-occupation and wild craving after technique, a return to simpler, more primitive conditions. I like more and more to sing without accompaniment. It makes me feel a greater freedom and amplitude, a completer possession of my own voice. A number of times I have passed thus into improvisation, the words and the music coming together and demanding utterance. It is the

most wonderful, ecstatic sensation in the whole range of musical art. I have felt like one possessed, inspired! Now *that* seems to me the real thing. That was the method of the old bards and poets. Thus Homer chanted his epics; thus sang the Hebrew prophets, and thus have been born the Folksongs of great nations. The memory of it still survives in the Eisteddfods, where poets are crowned and songs still improvised.

"I was greatly impressed by one of these Welsh Festivals, which I attended, and felt mightily honoured when they proclaimed me a bard, with the title 'Pencerrd Eos Alban' (the 'Nightingale of England'), after two white-haired men had conducted me in state through the crowd. I heard beautiful voices there, and incredible things accomplished. For example, two of them improvised together—one chanting the words, the other giving them an appropriate accompaniment. Some day the larger world will again demand this sort of music, and great souls will return to the freedom which it gives them."

In setting up the dictum "More Heart and less Art" as the final end for which vocalists should strive, Antoinette Sterling did not by any means propose that they should avoid or even cut short the necessary training. To all those who came to her for advice, she would say, "Go and study hard for three or four years (longer if possible) *with one of the first masters*, so that under their guidance the voice may be gradually developed without strain, and the necessary command over the instrument thus obtained." She was a firm believer in the old Italian school of Manuel Garcia, which she had learned from the great maestro himself,

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and from his pupils Mme. Marchesi and Mme. Viardot. But in urging all singers to study for at least three years before attempting to come out, her advice was to go to the best and none but the best. It was false economy, she always said, to imagine that singing could be learned more cheaply by going to second-rate masters, who had in many cases received practically no proper training themselves. The result of doing so was to be seen in the many voices which had been ruined. In fact, she would assert that the study of singing followed the rule, which applied to everything else. To pay more at the time is the cheapest in the long run.

After the training was so far completed that absolute command of the instrument had been obtained and the rules of artistic singing properly learned, then was the time to go to Nature, to cultivate heart, to find out how the rules which had been learned might be broken with impunity. In all branches of art few, if indeed any, have been able to rise to supreme greatness without training, no matter what their natural facility, talent, or genius. Sarah Bernhardt worked hard at the Paris Conservatoire, Paderewski studied the piano under a great master, Irving spent years in stock companies (the equivalent training in the dramatic profession), and it was the same with those who have been pre-eminent in the painting world.

So, too, Antoinette Sterling passed many years in study before she arrived at that simplicity of singing which from its ease and naturalness made many assert, with the uncompromising conviction of ignorance, that she had never had a lesson in her life. It was but another

example of the tenet "*Summa Ars est celare Artem*"—"The Highest Art is to conceal the Art"—not "*Summa Ars est celare Naturam*," which has been slyly suggested as a suitable motto for painters belonging to the Impressionist school.

With her it was only as the culminating result of all the musical training that by this apparent simplicity of method she was able to produce an effect which her audiences could never forget. As she once said: "People think ballads are easy to sing. As a matter of fact they are the most *difficult* of all music to render with true effect. The ballad is simple in words, melody, and accompaniment. There is nothing to help out the singer. It depends entirely on the power of expression, the intensity, the variety of feeling. There are no orchestra, scenery, romantic costumes or gestures. It is a question of art, interpretation, and personality combined."

Equivalent to the ballad is the recitation as compared to acting. Sometimes at special charity performances Sir Henry Irving used to come on to the platform in everyday dress and recite "Eugene Aram." By his own unaided powers he had to create the whole scene and atmosphere before the mind's eye of the audience. How much more difficult was this than to appear, say, in the "Bells," where scenery, dress, lighting, and music all combined to assist in creating that mysterious eeriness which the dialogue demanded. So, too, of all music the ballad is often the most difficult to sing *with proper effect*, though perhaps the easiest to "get through." It shows the power of an artist more almost than anything else.

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In ballad singing the contralto used to rely a great deal on the dramatic inspiration of the moment. She would render the same song in quite a different way on different occasions, according to how she felt the words at the time. Even so do other great artists, particularly upon the stage, give vent to sudden inspiration and completely change their reading of a scene. As examples of this one may quote Ellen Terry, Duse, and Calvé. It gives a spontaneity to their performance which must inevitably lend additional charm.

Owing to the above fact, however, accompanists sometimes found Madame Sterling very difficult to follow at the piano. They would perhaps ask for a rehearsal, and then after the song had been gone through one way, they would at the concert find it taken with quite a different tempo at various points. Above all things in her singing she placed the words first in importance. If the music and words were at variance in a song, there was never any hesitation as to what was to be done. Should the phrasing of the music interfere with *the true expression of the poem*, the music had to give way. Moreover, when the introduction to the song was over, she was very much against having more than a bar or two for the piano between the verses. Her feeling was that it distracted the thoughts of the listeners, and was apt to take away their interest from the story which she was telling.

This tendency to delete any, to her mind, superfluous bars of music increased as time went on, and latterly the actual accompaniments to the songs in her *répertoire* were cut down to the smallest possible limits. Particularly was this the case with her Scotch songs. In

these the verses would practically go straight on without a break, the symphonies between the verses being almost entirely eliminated. Still more drastic, if possible, was her treatment of the finish of a piece. A couple of bars, played very quickly, were the utmost she would permit to be sounded after the voice had ceased. Woe betide the composer who had rounded off the close of his composition with several bars of haunting melody for the piano. The chances were that they would be slashed out bodily, and a single chord inserted in their place. Musicians often sighed at the liberties which she took with their work, but as these had the effect of turning the songs into big popular successes, it is a question whether the ruffled feelings were not adequately recompensed by the size of the cheques received on account of "royalties."

There is a story of a young accompanist and his first meeting with the contralto. He had been trained at an institution, where everything had been performed in strict tempo to the metronome. He was thoroughly qualified to play off any music at sight, and to follow the indications marked by the composer. He could be relied on to quicken gradually, or to make a gentle rallentando, leaving undone nothing which ought to be done—in fact, behaving, in his own eyes, in a thoroughly safe manner. One of his first important engagements was for a concert at which Antoinette Sterling was to appear. A few days beforehand, the entrepreneur said, "You'd better write to Madame, and ask for a rehearsal." The fledgeling looked very superior, and pooh-poohed the idea. "Oh, I can read anything at sight, whether it be by Wagner or any other composer. Really, to run

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through two or three simple little ballads would be a trifle ridiculous." The advice was repeated with a smile of amusement at the surprise in store for him. Eventually it was agreed that he should have a rehearsal. On arriving he was received with that kindness which the singer ever displayed towards young artists. After a short chat, he sat down at the piano with the manuscript of "We're a' noddin'" before his eyes, and gave a correct rendering of the opening symphony at a leisurely gait. The vocalist at once threw herself into the situation, opened prestissimo, suddenly slowed up, then rushed on two or three bars, only to bring up unexpectedly with a long *rallentando*. During this pause he galloped excitedly through the music, and had finished the refrain before he realized that the artist was still holding on a note at the middle of a verse. He gasped, went back, followed her successfully for a few bars, and once more became at sea. Again he tried to keep with her ; again he failed hopelessly. At last his feelings got the better of him. He threw the music down, and exclaimed in a scathing voice—at least he *meant* it to sound scathing—"Do you wish me to play this song the way it is written or the way you sing it?" All the reply vouchsafed him was, "Do you know who taught me to sing that song? God! Play it as I sing it."

The only little difference that ever arose between Antoinette Sterling and John Boosey, the founder of the musical firm of that name, was over the words of a new song. Her husband had taken down to the publishers a ballad which it was proposed should be brought out at the St. James's Hall. Its title was one which afterwards became well known to London audiences: "Don't be

Sorrowful, Darling." The manager's face was wreathed in smiles of approval as he glanced through it. Then suddenly a horrified look came over him, and he drew up at the words—

But God is God, my darling,
Of the Night as well as the Day.

He pointed out with due politeness that it was all very well to sing such words at a Sacred Concert, but at one of the "Ballads"—oh, no, it was not to be thought of, it was absolutely impossible. My father did not want to have any bother, so after talking the matter over finally agreed with him that it would not do to shock the susceptibilities of the British Ballad Concert Public by mentioning "God" in their presence. The line must be altered somehow. After several suggestions had been rejected, they mutually decided that instead of the words running "God is God, my darling," a compromise should be effected by the substitution of "There is a Power, my darling."

The French have a proverb, "L'homme propose et Dieu dispose." There ought to be a companion to this, "L'homme propose et Femme oppose." It was certainly the case on this occasion, for when the singer came to hear of the alteration she was up in arms at once. "Why shouldn't she say 'God is God, my darling, of the Night as well as the Day'? Wasn't it true that He was? Were they ashamed of God? Very well." "But," her husband interposed in his quiet voice, "you see, the public might not like it at a Ballad Concert." "Why?" "They have never had such a thing before." "Then how can Mr. Boosey tell that they wouldn't like it?"

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He conveyed this argument to John Boosey, who gallantly replied that Madame Sterling should of course sing the words, if she particularly wished to do so. And so it came about that after having been the first to appear on the platform at evening concerts in morning dress, she was also the first to introduce the name of God to a Ballad Concert audience. That the innovation did not upset their feelings the present-day programmes and published lists of "latest successes" bear ample witness.

In her method of interpretation, Antoinette Sterling, as has been already seen, always attached greater importance to the words than to the music. When a song was brought to her, and the composer said, "Let me sing it over to you," she would reply, "Read me the words first." If she disapproved of these, nothing would induce her to add it to her *répertoire*. True sentiment she liked. False sentimentality she abominated. For this reason she refused to bring out several songs which afterwards became enormous financial successes when taken up by other artists.

The composer who brought her a song could not, however, look on it as being accepted when she expressed herself as satisfied with the words. The music had to please her as well. The other was merely a preliminary ordeal to qualify the piece for perusal. If the music did not please her, she would under no consideration whatever have anything more to do with it. On more than one occasion society amateur musicians offered her blank cheques to sing a song of theirs a dozen times in London, so that when it was published there might be printed on the outside those magic

words "Sung by Madame Antoinette Sterling," which they knew would in themselves assure a sale of many thousand copies. Needless to say, the cheques were firmly refused.

The following is the description which my mother gave of "The Three Fishers," the reasons which prompted her to adopt the interpretation which she did, and the verdict given by Charles Kingsley upon hearing her rendering of his words :—

"Although I had never been at sea in a storm, and had never even seen fishermen, I somehow understood that song of 'The Three Fishers' by instinct. On reading the poem over for the first time, no one could know from the opening that the men would necessarily be drowned. Therefore it was a story. But there is a natural tendency to anticipate an unhappy ending, in spite of the lesson given so long ago to 'think no evil.' Hence it was customary to begin the song so mournfully that everybody realized from the very start what the end was going to be. Madame Sainton Dolby, for instance, used to sing it sorrowfully from the first note to the last. I had never seen or known of any one who was drowned, but that mysterious instinct was so strong that I could not foreshadow the finish. When, therefore, I started, I always made the first verse quite bright. I must believe it was the true way, since both the poet and the composer most warmly endorsed my reading of it.

"Charles Kingsley invited me down to Eversley once, to my great delight, and asked me to sing 'The Three Fishers' for him. I was young then, and had 'boy'-nature enough to sit down and do it at once. At the close he said, 'I have seen many wrecks among the fishermen. That is true to the very life. The excitement and tragedy come at the time they are being

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drowned, not afterwards. Then follows the calm and resignation.' He asked for something else, and when I had sung 'Caller Herrin' he walked out of the room, covering his face with his hands, so deeply was he affected. I had several sweet mementoes of Eversley given to me: two photographs of Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley standing at the door, which opened out on to the lawn, a book of his life, and an old copy of Shakespeare's sonnets with the Kingsley coat of arms stamped upon it.

"I often went to visit Mrs. Kingsley. The last time I saw her, she was lying on the sofa ill and weak. She asked me several times what her husband had said on that occasion, and was so interested that she promised to keep quite quiet if I would sing 'The Three Fishers.' And so as she lay there in her drawing-room, her hands folded across her breast, I repeated it, and afterwards, out of my little book, sang her twenty more songs."

A touching insight into Charles Kingsley's life is shown by the deep attachment which he always had for his old nurse. For years he would go every day to see her and sit with her, and was intensely upset at her death.

When on tour in Australia, the contralto met one of the nurses who had been a member of his household. She said that he had told her how once "on going to a concert to hear Madame Sterling sing 'The Three Fishers,'" he was so stirred by its tragical truth that he could only sob. "How marvellous," my mother wrote in her diary, "is that instinct which leads to the truth unknown to the personality! Mr. Kingsley had wished to hear what it was in that song which took such a hold of the people. Sitting there alone in a remote corner, he found so many things made manifest

in the words accentuated by the human voice, in the poetry beautified by the halo of the music, that he wept to find how much more there was in the lines than he himself had ever seen."

The following is her description of the writing and first performance of "The Lost Chord":—

"One day my husband read the verses, and took a very great fancy to them, seeing the possibilities of a wonderful effect if only he could get them set by the right man. After much thought, he came to the conclusion that the one of all others from whom they were most likely to receive the proper setting was Mr. Arthur Sullivan. He accordingly went to the composer, and on broaching the subject was met with the astonishing reply, 'I *have* set them.' In his Scotch way, my husband said no more, but returned and told me. I had never heard of any such song, and was sure it had not been brought out. He therefore set off once more to make further inquiries, and found that it had been set—all but the last verse. I always think that Sullivan was not permitted to finish it till we met.

"I well remember going to rehearse it with him for the first time. On handing me the manuscript, his first words were, 'It won't be a success, I'm afraid.' I shall never forget the anxiety felt by all of us as to how it would be received—least of all, perhaps, by myself. The first performance took place at one of the Ballad Concerts. The composer himself was at the piano, and Sydney Naylor at the organ. What excitement, when it was over! What applause burst out on all sides! It was the greatest success that had ever been made by a new song, and the wonderful sale of over half a million



Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

Arthur Sullivan

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copies during the following twenty-five years speaks to the lasting nature of this. The song was indeed an inspiration, and he wrote to me in a letter, shortly before his death, these words : ‘ I have composed much music since then, but have never written a second “Lost Chord.” ’

“ I have had it played for me by all sorts of organists—good, bad, and indifferent ; on all sorts of organs—high, low, in tune, out of tune, too large and too small ; but the funniest experience I ever had of singing it was at a concert given by Sims Reeves. Sir John Stainer was at the organ this time, and at the piano no longer ‘ Mr.’ but now Sir Arthur Sullivan. I went out and greeted the audience, and vice versa. Then I waited for the few bars of introduction to swell out on the organ. But lo ! no sound came from the huge instrument. Sir Arthur and I looked at each other aghast. After waiting some minutes, we turned our eyes instinctively towards the organ loft. There stood Sir John, wildly signalling to us that something was amiss. It was found that through some misunderstanding the water which worked the bellows had never been turned on. It was only a very short time before the mistake was rectified, and the familiar strains rolled out, but to me it seemed half an hour as I stood waiting on the platform. Many people thought that we had arranged the whole thing for a dramatic and realistic situation of the chord which was lost.”

Though “ The Lost Chord ” was undoubtedly the most popular of all her songs, in later years she took far greater delight in the performance of “ Crossing the Bar.” Whenever possible on tour this song would be

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put down, while it was almost invariably given as the *en-core* on any occasion when "The Lost Chord" had been specially requested to be included in the programme.

In looking out for a new song it was her usual practice to find a poem suitable for her purpose, and then give it to a composer to set for her. "Crossing the Bar," however, was not chosen in this way. Shortly after Lord Tennyson's death, Mr. A. H. Behrend, a grandson of Balfe of "Bohemian Girl" fame, came to call one day, and brought with him a very beautiful setting of the words. The music at once appealed to her dramatic feeling, with its impressive melody and alternation of organ and piano, the two joining together finally in the lines—

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the Bar.

Of all the times on which the song was rendered by her, one impressed itself above all the rest upon her memory. It was at a concert given one winter at Penzance. The elements seemed conspiring together to make a fit accompaniment to those glorious words. The wind was blowing as though all the Furies had been let loose. A storm was at its height, the lightning lit up the sky, and was followed a moment later by peal on peal of thunder. Inside the Concert Hall, like a deep "ground bass," was heard the heavy rise and fall of the sea, as the waves came roaring in to dash over the Bar. The elements, thus joining in with the voice and the organ, combined to produce one of the most powerful effects which it would be possible to imagine.

One may perhaps be allowed to leap from the sublime

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to the ridiculous, and relate an amusing anecdote in connexion with one of her Scotch songs. I give the scene in my mother's words.

“It took place at Dundee upon one of the annual tours. At the hotel I heard there was to be in the banqueting room a meeting of the Bakers' Guild during the evening. I supposed it to be some small gathering of local tradesmen and their friends, so, on entering the hall of the hotel about ten o'clock, I announced that I was going up to sing to them. When I was inside the door, I found that there were screens across that end of the room. The waiters and servants belonging to the place were standing behind these to hear what was going on. The last speech of the evening was being made, so I was informed. It was a long one, and sparkled with witticism. No one could guess what the toast was towards which the speaker was paving the way. For fear they might break up before I had time to begin, I stood ready to step before the screen immediately the speech should have come to an end. In my mind I decided to sing the Scotch song which had been down on the programme earlier in the evening. The toast was led up to, and all were waiting for the solution to the riddle. What could this wonderful something be which had been so praised? Just as the speaker came to the final sentence, and at the very instant he was saying, ‘I ask you to join me in drinking to the health of Woman,’ the screen was withdrawn, and I commenced singing ‘A Wee Wifie’ without having heard what the toast was. They all applauded, and laughed immoderately, being surprised at the aptness of the song. But I was far more surprised than they, though for a very different

reason. I had expected to see a few poor bakers. Instead of that, all the swells of the town were gathered together before my astonished eyes."

Another Scotch song proved equally à propos, but this time deliberately so. Antoinette Sterling had been invited by the head-master of Winchester to spend a day at the school as his guest. When she arrived, a deputation from the boys came to ask whether she would be kind enough to sing for them in the evening. Realizing from her knowledge of Eton ways that the necessity of attending "early school" before breakfast, winter and summer, was one of the great sorrows of boys at public schools, she decided that nothing could be more suitable, or more likely to appeal to them, than the sentiments of "Up in the Morning Early" with its refreshing refrain—

Up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' airly.
I'd rather gae supperless tae ma bed
Than rise in the mornin' airly.

The sixth form applauded with stately dignity when she rose to sing. Evidently they were expecting something solemn. When they heard—

Cold blows the wind frae north tae south,
The drift is drivin' sairly,

a look of relieved and gratified surprise appeared on every face. As verse followed verse, the singer could not resist the temptation to give a little side glance at them. It delighted her intensely to see the wave of agreement rippling along the lines of boys, unanimous in its approval of those sentiments so well expressed in the canny Scots' broad dialect. The masters were lost

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in thought, dreaming possibly how refreshing it might be to forget the six hundred boys and join in the chorus. All of a sudden they seemed to awaken to the side play which was going on before them, for as the singer caught the boys' eyes again, the smiles crystallized into something more definite. Those in authority grew suspicious of some joke being played upon somebody by some one—when and how and where they knew not—and the song ended amid peals of laughter.

A visit to Dr. Percival, the head-master of Rugby, met with much the same result. She attended the school concert, and sat with the head-master in the front row of seats. At the end of the programme, the audience began calling out for her to sing them something. Without any preparation or fuss, she turned round, nodded, stood up with her cloak on, for they were on the point of rising to go, and gave the same song which had been so appreciated at Winchester. Again there was the same excitement of the boys over the feelings to which the poem gave vent—

Up in the mornin', na, na, na,
Up in the mornin' airly.
A penniless purse I'd rather drae
Than rise in the mornin' airly.

It only goes towards proving that whatever may be said upon the subject by the Wise Men of the East, or the West or any other point of the compass, all boys are pretty unanimous upon this point.

It was another Scotch song which was the cause of an unfortunate accompanist being subjected to roars of laughter from the audience.

My mother thus relates the story:—

“Poor old Pitman! It was at one of Gatty’s Concerts, where he was accompanist, that I had a joke at his expense—perfectly unintentional as usual. I was giving as an encore a Scotch song containing some seven or eight verses which I generally sang right through. After the first verse there was clapping, and the same after each one that followed. At the end of the fourth, I thought that I had sung enough, as it was an encore, so while the applause was going on I made my bow and left the platform. The pianist was an old man, otherwise the mistake would not have happened. He never noticed that I had retired to the artistes’ room, and none of the orchestra would tell him, for they were enjoying the situation immensely. The applause came to a sudden stop as soon as the audience saw what was going on. Pitman, still thinking I was there, began the next verse and played the first few bars: no voice: played them over again; still no voice. At last, realizing that something was wrong, he turned around, and to his intense surprise saw no Miss Sterling, but discovered instead the orchestra in fits of laughter. Finally, he was forced to beat a hasty and confused retreat amid derisive cheers from the gallery.”

In the course of her concert work the contralto underwent several trying experiences owing to the vagaries of the British climate. One of the worst was the result of a London fog. She had been engaged to sing at the Albert Hall at an evening concert. The morning began with a light haze, which by six o’clock had developed into a thickish fog. With great difficulty she managed to get to the Hall, accompanied by my

father, an architect friend, and myself. On arriving we heard that several artists had wired "Impossible to come," among the number Sims Reeves. There was a surprisingly large audience considering the night. One could not see across the Hall, so much fog had come in. As for the unhappy vocalists, the taking of deep breaths met with disastrous consequences, and as they came off the platform each in turn was rendered *hors de combat* for some minutes through violent fits of coughing. By the interval the atmosphere had grown worse, and at the end of the concert it was so dense outside that it seemed impossible to believe that we should ever get home that night at all. However, we entered a four-wheeler, engaged three linkmen, and set out. We learned afterwards that the brougham had started out to fetch the party in good time, but at last, after wandering off to Fulham, the coachman had given up the attempt as hopeless, and returned to the stables via Shepherd's Bush in the "sma' wee hours o' the mornin'." By the time we had driven twenty yards the Albert Hall had vanished completely from view, in spite of all its brilliant illuminations. We were now on our journey. As long as we were in Knightsbridge all was fairly safe. In an evil moment the driver took us into the park, intending to cut across to Bayswater. After struggling on for a few minutes the vehicle stopped, and the wretched Jehu descended to consult with the linkmen. As a result of the conference, he came round to say that he could not take the responsibility of driving any further. This being so, my father climbed on to the box and took possession of the reins, while the cabby led the horse at a pace such as a snail

might have laughed to scorn. One of the linkmen walked in front and the others on either side. Every moment we were afraid of finding ourselves in the Serpentine. It was only by the thought that we were bound to hear a preliminary splash made by one of the torch-bearers that we felt at all consoled.

Meanwhile the fog grew worse and worse. We seemed to be going all the time in quite a wrong direction. However, at last we found a gate and thence passed into a road. No one knew what it was, nor was there any means of finding out. There did not appear to be a soul about. We crawled along for some minutes, getting more and more perplexed. We were on the point of giving up in despair, and resigning ourselves to the idea of spending the night at the first place where we could obtain bedrooms. Suddenly the front linkman found himself charging a wall. He lifted his light to see what it was, and there, staring him in the face, were the welcome words "Stanhope Place." We had arrived home when we least expected it. Paradise regained indeed!

In connexion with the Albert Hall, a rather strange coincidence once happened to Antoinette Sterling, which for some minutes enfolded her in a mental fog as complete as the material one which has been described.

"Dr. Barnardo was very anxious for me to sing for his boys," she writes. "As I had a great deal of concert work to get through all over the country, we thought it better to refuse, so as to save my strength as far as possible. But though I had written to this effect, the Fates willed otherwise. This was how it came about. One Thursday, I ordered the carriage and set out to sing at

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Madame Patti's afternoon concert. I drove up and descended at the artistes' entrance. All around the doorway I found clusters of nurses in their pretty caps and aprons. It seemed rather curious, but I thought that, with her usual thoughtfulness, Madame Patti had invited some institute of nurses to be present. I entered the artistes' room and found no *diva*, only some more nurses. Thence I went to the platform. On looking out I found the centre of the hall filled with cots and beds, boys drilling, and children of all sizes going through various actions. On inquiring I found that I had made a mistake in the date. The Patti concert was the following Thursday at the same hour, and this was actually the meeting at which I had refused to assist. I sent for Dr. Barnardo at once, and said that evidently I was meant to come and sing for him, refusal or no refusal, and so I would."

When my mother, who was always particularly fond of singing to undergraduate audiences, went up to Oxford for the first time, it was with considerable misgivings. She had been told beforehand that the audiences of "undergrads" were always on the look-out for a chance to "rag." There was a hum of expectation among those drawn together to see the new American contralto, whose voice had been making such a sensation in London. The sound rose to a still more excited buzz as she was escorted down the centre of the room to the place which had been curtained off behind the stage for the use of the artists. The present Town Hall, with its magnificent accommodation, had not as yet been built, and the evening concerts were usually given in the largest room at the Examination Schools. When enter-

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tainments took place there, a temporary platform would be prepared with a small artists' room curtained off at the back. To call it a room is distinctly euphemistic. As a matter of cold-blooded detail, it was a passage barely five feet wide, interrupted in the middle by the massive seat on which the examiners would be perched when "schools" were on. Over the steps leading up to this academic eyrie all had to climb, when they desired to reach the other end of the platform. Up and down the passage the performers would pace "weary and ill at ease," like so many lions in a den—only they couldn't roar, owing to the fact that the slightest noise proceeding from their lair was heard all over the room. All that could be done was to growl, and at this part of the entertainment Signor Foli used to be a special adept. He always liked to boom out a scale, or a few bars of some song, before going on to the platform, and here, of course, he almost feared to clear his throat. Altogether, a concert at Oxford in those days was not an unmixed pleasure for the artists taking part, and, like that of the policeman, it is to be feared their "lot was not a happy one."

When Miss Sterling went on to the platform, and received a great deal of applause after her first song, she thought the undergraduates were "ragging" her, and so began to feel quite confused. The audience saw this, and were delighted with it, clapping more vigorously than ever. Her next appearance was greeted with such an ovation that she nearly ran off again, so perfectly convinced did she feel that, whatever the earlier demonstration might have meant, this time there could certainly be no doubt whatever that they were ragging. It was

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not until the concert was over, and the manager came round to tell her what every one had been saying about her singing, that she could be persuaded they had not been "getting at her" throughout the evening.

After making such a marvellous success, and establishing a position in the foremost rank of London favourites, it would have been more than pardonable for her to have put on an air of superiority. It was, however, this absolute lack of anything like "side," even at the very zenith of her career, which was perhaps one of her greatest charms.

The artists' room of curtains and the temporary platform were bad enough, but they were a considerable improvement upon the accommodation provided at the sister University of Cambridge, when she sang there for the first time. It was on the occasion of a local charity concert. On arriving, she found in place of an artists' room a little corner of the hall partitioned off by means of two rickety screens. But this was nothing to the rest. When she came to look for the platform—well, to use an Irishism, the most noticeable thing about the platform was that there wasn't any. In point of fact, for the first and only time in her life, Antoinette Sterling sang—standing on a table!

CHAPTER VI

LOVE FOR SCOTLAND

“OH, the Scotch heart, the Scotch mind, the Scotch tongue, the Scotch oat-cakes, the ‘Caller and the dried herrin’, I love them all !”

There is no half-hearted praise about such an all-sweeping assertion as this. The feeling which prompted Antoinette Sterling to write such words came to the surface whenever any one or anything brought to her mind thoughts of Scotland.

“Dear Edinburgh ! Home of my heart, my soul, my spirit ! As I lay in bed this morning, looking out upon the castle and the hillside, I felt so happy that the tears poured out of my eyes. When I arrived here, I seemed like an exile coming back. It felt, somehow, as though London were my resting-place, but Edinburgh my home.”

These words were written in one of my mother’s journals, during a concert tour through Scotland. The city, with all its many beauties and associations, could not help appealing to her. But what attracted her more than all these were her many intimate friends who resided there.

In addition to those whom she knew in private life, there were others on whom there beat the fierce light of

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publicity. Such were Noel Paton, Professor Blackie, Dr. John Brown, and William Nelson, not to mention the canine celebrity "Grey Friars Bobby."

Sir Noel Paton was one of the leading Scotch painters of his time, his best-known pictures being the two on "Oberon and Titania," which are in the Edinburgh National Gallery. He was duly elected a member of the Scottish Academy, and in 1865 became Queen's Limner, an honour which was followed two years later by knighthood. Many spare moments were devoted to literature, and two volumes of poetry were published by him. The contralto gives the following description of her first visit to their house :—

"When I entered, Lady Paton held out both arms and kissed me over and over again, saying she could hardly believe that A. S. had really come."

"A. S." was my mother's favourite way of referring to any incident connected with her appearances as Madame Sterling, apart from her private life as Mrs. MacKinlay.

"I told her I had come to sing to them about 'De poor lost sheep of de sheepfold,' and we went down to Sir Noel's studio. There, standing in front of his canvas, I saw the most magnificent type of Scotchman (he might have been a Michelangelo model), with a face which suggested that of the beloved George MacDonald. He looked like one of those paintings of the prophets or heroes. Such a head! such a front! A glory of greyish hair with the Scotch crinkly waves; a beard, long and heavy, curly and thick; massive shoulders, fearless eyes and commanding pose, grand in stature, noble from head to foot, and a heart to match. Lady Paton was true, loving, womanly and sweet, a fit

mate for him. And as they stood together in the studio A. S. sang, 'And de poor los' sheep of de sheepfold, dey all come gatherin' in. Ah! Ah!'"

John Stuart Blackie was another interesting personality. Born in Glasgow, and educated at Aberdeen and Edinburgh, he was indeed "very Scot of very Scot." A writer of exceptional versatility, he started by making a translation of Goethe's "Faust" into English verse. Having spent a year in studying at Göttingen and Berlin, he began to make a name by his articles on various German subjects. He was soon appointed Professor of Greek to the Edinburgh University, and it was here that the scene was laid of the well-known anecdote concerning the notice outside his lecture-room, announcing that he would be pleased to see his Classes on the following Monday.

He was always proud of the land of his "burrth," and was a strong advocate for the preservation of the Gaelic language.

His temperament was the very one to appeal to Antoinette Sterling, and this is how she describes her meeting with him:—

"O that dear, strange, wonderful Professor Blackie—just an outcome of Scotland, like a bit of wild, strange, beautiful mountain scenery with rushing waters and quiet lakes; unconventional to the highest degree. We were so alike in disposition that I might almost have been of the same family. The Professor knew we were coming, and came to open the door himself, a white straw tall hat upon his head. 'I came to receive my guests myself. No men-servants here,' were his words of greeting.

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“He had on a white tie with long flowing ends, and reminded me rather of Joshua Fox, of Falmouth, only Fox was taller, broader, and quieter—a Quaker, around whom all things with wings flocked in such numbers that you could scarcely distinguish him. Mrs. Blackie was a tall, remarkable woman, with blue-grey eyes, original in her ideas, and extremely musical. Taking Mrs. Balfour and A. S. on either arm, the Professor conducted us to the drawing-room, where we had a flow of wit and humour, touching stories, and Scotch songs. As I sang, he kept saying, ‘Follow nature! That’s right!’ beating time with his two hands all the while. Every few verses he would join in, and sing a few lines with me. He was then eighty-four years old and said he was going to keep on working until the day he died. At the carriage door I remember his saying, ‘I worship God! I worship God!’ He was religious, but very unorthodox—I was going to say ‘Thank God!’ and I *do* say it ten thousand times.”

It was a little over a year after this visit that Professor Blackie passed away.

Another time when she was singing in the Scotch capital, she went to see Isabella Glyn, a well-known actress and Shakespearean reciter, who had been at the height of her position about the year 1845, and was now close upon sixty years of age. After a little time, Miss Glyn, who had herself been born in Edinburgh, asked her visitor whether she had ever met Dr. John Brown. On hearing that she had not done so, she took her to his house. He was an M.D. of the University, but his practice was never large, and it was by his pen that he achieved fame. Antoinette Sterling had always loved

his writings, in which simplicity of language and tenderness of expression were such predominating features, while through all there flowed a delightful humour, with its gentle undercurrent of pathos. He spoke long to her of the famous "Rab," the uncouth mastiff of whom he had been so fond, and showed her a picture of his dear old doggy. But of "Rab's" friends there was no sign, to her great disappointment.

This conversation about Rab kindled a desire to see the other great canine celebrity of Edinburgh, "Grey Friars Bobby." "And so it was," my mother writes, "that I went to make the acquaintance of that renowned Scotch terrier. He had belonged for many years to a poor man, who was otherwise so stranded and alone that when he died there was no mourner to follow his coffin save his old dog. After the burial, Bobby lived and slept in the cemetery close by his master's grave. He never left the place excepting when the minute gun was fired at the old fortress. Then he went for his 'mess,' which was paid for as long as he lived, as a reward for such loving fidelity."

The following day she went over to see Mr. MacGeorge, "writer to the Signet," and related to him and to another Scotch friend, Sir George A., the story of her visit to the graveyard. On her return to town she received an amusing letter from Mr. MacGeorge :—

"Sir George proved a recreant knight after all. When he left the atmosphere of your presence and the influence of that syren voice, he fell back to his infidelity regarding 'Bobby.' He does not deny that *you* may have seen that bewitching individual—the original of the photograph ; but he says that when *he* went to the Grey

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Friars he saw another dog altogether, being the first at hand, seized to do duty and satisfy the tender inquiries of the visitor. He adds that if *I* go to the classic grave, the probability is I may meet a reception postulating even more of the element of variety. So I don't know what to make of it, and in the meantime, until I get further light, I trust you will bear with me and not take it amiss if I defer my visit. The above version of 'Bobby' has frightened me terribly.—In much alarm and doubt, I remain, most truly yours."

A great deal of amusing correspondence used to pass between them, of which the following is typical. It was sent in reply to a letter, in which the singer had described to Mr. MacGeorge a boy whom she had seen on her travels.

Ahoy! Ahoy!!

My charming boy,

My pride and my joy,

So bold yet so coy—

Surpassing the heroes of Carthage and Troy:

With such an expression—*a je ne sais quoy*,

So pure and so perfect, without an alloy,

In peace such a lambkin—in war a Rob Roy:

But yet who would nothing molest or destroy,

Not a rival indeed, if it would me annoy.

Then surely the rest of my life I'll employ

In making bonbons for this dear little boy!"

Stories of the pawky Scotch wit always appealed to Antoinette Sterling more than those which concerned any other nationality. The more serious anecdotes of the race met with still more appreciation. For instance, she always delighted to recall the grace—

Some hae meat, wha canna eat,

Some could eat but want it;

But I hae meat, and I can eat,

So let the Lord be thankit;

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while she could rarely resist following it up with the story of the "canny mon" who was honestly outspoken in the expression of his desires—

God bless me and my wife,
My son Jock, and *his* wife,
Us four, and nae more.

Amen.

A story which especially touched her was one which Max O'Rell told of three youths at the University of Aberdeen. So poor were they that they lived in one room. A single bed had to suffice for their needs, and they divided their time between study and sleep. They continued trying to keep body and soul together with the sparse fare of bread, water, and dried herring, until at last one was found dead, having fallen forward over his books, working to the end.

The mention of the dried herring on which they sought to exist recalls an incident in connexion with the contralto's rendering of the famous song "Caller Herrin'." Nearly always when she went to the Scottish capital she received an invitation to stay with her old friends the Nelsons. William Nelson was the head of the great publishing firm which had been founded by his father, Thomas Nelson, a man who was a fine example of the old Scottish type of silent, indomitable perseverance and sterling integrity.

Mr. and Mrs. Nelson had a very beautiful home, "Salisbury Green." Antoinette Sterling used to recount the ensuing episode which happened during one of her visits there. "Caller Herrin'" had long been one of her favourite songs, but though she had always

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pictured to herself the scene which the words suggested, she had never heard or seen any of those fishwives whose cry it was. When she arrived at Edinburgh, it was not many minutes before she passed some of them in the streets, and became quite excited at the meeting. During dinner she told her host how much she longed to hear one of these fisherfolk sing "Caller Herrin'." Next day, on his way to the publishing offices, he came upon some, and told them to go up to Salisbury Green. They went home and arrayed themselves in all their finery before starting out. When ushered into the presence of Mrs. Nelson and her guest, they were so scared and so shy that they could not even speak, and presented a strange sight as they stood there, encased in a sheath of eight or nine petticoats. These are the dowry of the fisherwomen. On any great occasion, especially upon their wedding day, as many as a dozen are worn. The hostess attempted to put the strange visitors at their ease, but it was useless. When Mrs. Nelson told them that "Miss Sterling" wanted them to sing "Caller Herrin'" they became more nervous than ever, shook their heads decisively, "Na, na, we canna dae that," and looked round to see whether they could not escape from the room. The contralto laughed and said, "Dinna fash yersels," and began singing the first verse herself. This delighted them so much, that when she invited them to join in with her in the second verse they did so with a zest, and, after having received this lead-off, it wanted very little further persuasion to get them to finish it without her.

The following is a letter which was sent, after hearing her in this same song, by David Wilson, her doctor,

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and at the same time one of her oldest and dearest Scotch friends in London:—

“MY DEAR MISS ANTOINETTE STERLING,—I cannot retire to bed before posting this note to say that you excelled yourself this evening—in ‘Caller Herrin’ especially. Your singing was to my mind grand and heavenly; your triumph surpassed, in my opinion, even the reception given to that old favourite ——. In fact, you are the Queen of Song, and that is plain truth. I feel more than trebly rewarded, in the improving condition of your vocal apparatus, for all the time bestowed upon it whereby it may and *shall* still further send forth into space in Divine perfection the marvellous and lovely emanations of that inspired soul, which the Father of Spirits has given unto thee. Your ‘Caller Herrin’ and its encore have positively given me a pain through pure emotion of the most elevated character. I have never been so aroused by song all my life as to-night. You carried me back as if by an electric shock to my student days in Edinburgh, when I was a lad of eighteen. You brought before my eyes again those fine Musselburgh fishwomen with their creels, calling out in the streets at eleven o’clock at night, as vividly as when I was close by them. The whole audience were riveted when you sang, afterwards calling out ‘Bravo! bravo!’ with myself. Some exclaimed ‘Magnificent!’ One lady close by me said she had heard it a dozen times, but never to such grand perfection. Good night, and God bless you!”

Dr. Wilson was one of the greatest homœopathists of his day, and used to effect the most astounding cures among patients. With a fine face, and the most beautiful white hair, he had a frank, honest, generous nature which endeared him to all who knew him. Moreover, he was as open-handed as he was open-hearted. From the well-to-do he received fees which on occasions ran into

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hundreds of guineas for special journeys; but from those who were too poor to afford proper payment he never turned away. It would be, in fact, no exaggeration to say that during each twelve months he saw hundreds of patients free of charge in his dispensing hours. He was of a somewhat excitable disposition, and, if the patients did not follow out to the letter all instructions which he gave, he very soon flared up and made them regret that they had broken his rules. Woe betide a professional nurse who failed in the tiniest portion of the duties which were to be expected of her. If he found that she had been guilty of any error or culpable neglect in the performance of her duties, he would quickly boil over and make her extremely sorry for herself. Once or twice, when the "scene" took place in a front room with the window open, the noise attracted quite a crowd outside. But the little excitements would vanish as quickly as they had appeared. In any case, his wrath was always just; and after all, it is not much good for a doctor to lay down rules and then have them broken.

The American singer first went to see the Doctor in his professional capacity soon after she had arrived in England. This meeting was the beginning of a great friendship, which soon grew up between the two, and beneath his hospitable roof she met for the first time Mary Anderson, Forbes Robertson, and many others for whom she afterwards came to have the deepest regard. She came to look upon Dr. Wilson as a second father, and soon began to call him "Pa." His daughter, Annie Wilson, became her closest and most inseparable companion, going with her almost every-

where. With the passing of years this intimacy became strengthened, as sorrow, and the loss of those dear to both, wrought fresh bonds of sympathy; and it resulted in a devoted friendship, which brought to Antoinette Sterling many of the happiest hours of her life.

The fact that she always called Dr. Wilson "Pa" led to an amusing episode. He was giving a dinner party, to which a certain very prim old maid had been invited. The Doctor was afraid it would shock this estimable lady to hear Miss Sterling address him as "Pa," and laugh and joke with him as she was accustomed to do. He therefore spoke seriously on the subject, and begged her to behave in a dignified way upon this occasion, and for the sake of propriety to address him by some less familiar appellation. Accordingly, with the arrival of the guest, she put on her company manners, talking with becoming restraint and reserve of the weather, and other kindred topics which are so absorbing to the English nation. When "Pa" addressed a remark, she answered dutifully, "Yes, Doctor," "No, Doctor," and all went well till the fruit was brought on. Then at last the blow fell. He was telling some story, which became more and more interesting until it reached a climax, when, after a pause, he brought it to an unexpected termination, and all realized that the narrative had been a "sell." This so disgusted her that, forgetful of all promises, she burst out, "Oh, pshaw, Pa!" This lapse from the promised good behaviour was greeted by roars of laughter. When these had subsided, the prim visitor said that she had heard all about it from a friend, and had quite realized what had been going on the whole time. The contralto heaved a sigh of relief that there

was no further necessity for her to enact an unaccustomed rôle. Departing with all speed from the thorny path of dignity, she enjoyed herself thoroughly for the rest of the evening.

Until the Doctor's death my parents made a point of going over to spend Sunday evening with him whenever they were in London. They would arrive in time for a sort of—"High Tea" it might have been styled, only, as tea was tabooed by the Doctor, it would be a Hibernianism to give that name to a meal in which the only liquid drunk was cocoa. The evening would afterwards be spent quietly in chatting or reading the papers to him.

For years it was my mother's invariable custom to drink the particular sort of cocoa which Dr. Wilson used to have specially prepared for his patients. It was rather complicated to get ready, as the making of it involved a constant stirring over the fire or spirit lamp for some minutes, until the milk (there was no water used, so that it was very nourishing, not to say fattening) had boiled up three times. In spite of this, wherever she went, it was her custom to take sufficient to last till her return. When staying at an hotel or in a friend's house, she would more often than not make it herself. This led to a rather awkward contretemps, in which she was guilty of unintentional rudeness. She had been invited to stay with some Quaker friends, who were manufacturers of a famous make of chocolate. When she arrived, her hostess inquired what she would like to do about meals, as she was singing in the evening. My mother answered that she usually had a chop and some stewed fruit about half-past four.

"I will see that they are made ready for you at that hour. What would you like to drink? I know it's no good offering tea. Perhaps you would care for a cup of chocolate?"

"Oh, no, thank you!" she answered, without thinking. "I don't care to take anything except my old doctor's cocoa. I have some with me." Bringing coals to Newcastle with a vengeance!

Of all her Scotch friends the earliest was the great poet-preacher, George MacDonald. After being educated at Aberdeen and at the Congregationalist College at Highbury, he became pastor at Arundel, and afterwards at Manchester. Here his health broke down, and it was a good deal owing to this circumstance that he came to London and embarked upon a literary career with the striking dramatic poem "Within and Without." This was followed by two volumes of verse, in the first of which occurred those oft-quoted lines—

Alas, how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too deep, or a kiss too long,
And then comes a mist and a weeping vain,
And life is never the same again.

But, of all the poems which he wrote, none is better known or more loved than the exquisite lullaby which commences—

Where do you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Poetry, however, did not pay in those days any more than it does now, and at the suggestion of Mrs. MacDonald he decided to attempt some prose work. A



Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

George MacDonald.

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few days later a friend related to him a strange epitaph which he had happened on—

Here lie I, David Elginbrod.
Have mercy on my soul, O God!
As I would do if I were God,
And Thou wert David Elginbrod.

This gave him the idea for his first novel, which duly came out under that title, and was an immediate success. "David Elginbrod" was followed two years after by "Adela Cathcart" and "The Portent." Next came "Alec Forbes," and after that some fresh work continued to be published at regular intervals. The most famous of all his books was, of course, "Robert Falconer," which at the time was considered almost too daring for publication—a strange idea looked at from the present-day standpoint.

In 1872, George MacDonald went over to America, and it was then that Antoinette Sterling became acquainted with him.

"My first meeting with that apostle of love, of poetry, of kindness, of nobleness," she wrote, in relating the story of her friendship with him, "was when he came to New York during a lecturing tour. He was advertised to speak one night upon the subject of Burns at the Young Men's Christian Association Hall. I had always been a devotee of Robbie Burns and of George MacDonald's books. I therefore set out for the Hall with a friend during a heavy rain storm, clad in a large waterproof and goloshes. The latter I always call 'rubbers,' much to the amusement of English people. We sat entranced all through the evening, until suddenly some one called out: 'No lecture upon

Burns could be perfect without the voice of one of his most enthusiastic followers and greatest exponents—Miss Sterling.’ From his first words I somehow imagined that Mr. MacDonald must have brought a protégée, whom he wished to introduce to the American public. I was simply horror-struck to hear my own name pronounced at the end of the sentence. The three thousand or more people burst out into loud clapping, while I only felt confused and sat immovable. But the public will was so strong, and the calls were so loud and unintermitting, that the lecturer was obliged to stand still, supposing, of course, that the demonstration had been arranged, and I was a young singer wanting an appearance. At last some one came and literally pulled me on to the platform. I had not yet recovered my self-possession, and stood there stupefied by the rush and din. Amid cries for ‘A Man’s a Man for a’ That,’ I jumped out into the open sea of music, and, with no idea of absolute pitch, started half dazed at the middle of the first verse. The crowd grew more boisterous than ever, and my mind fell into greater confusion. I went on to the second verse, but suddenly came to a barren place. All the words disappeared. This was hardly to be wondered at, for I had never before sung it without holding the music in my hand. I had foolishly learned to depend on having the words to refer to in case of a lapse of memory. I hesitated for a moment, and then there sounded in my ear the soft, rich, Scotch voice of George MacDonald, ‘Gie fules their silks and knaves their wine.’ It was like giving a toboggan a little push down the hill. It started the wheels of memory, and, like a hidden mental phono-

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graph, the machinery worked. I went through the rest of the song somehow, and was very glad to get back to my waterproof and those goloshes, which always seem to make one feel like a large, clumsy penguin walking along.

"The next time I saw the poet-preacher was at a church in New York City, where I knew he was going to preach. There was a small gallery directly over the pulpit. Here I took up my position, and at the close of the sermon, much to the congregation's surprise, sang, without accompaniment, 'The Lord is our Shepherd.'"

When the contralto came to England she saw a great deal of George MacDonald and his family, and, as has been already stated, it was he who gave her away on the occasion of her marriage.

One of my earliest recollections is that of being taken as a small boy to high tea at his house, and then on to a church in the suburbs at which he was going to conduct the service. The simplicity and directness of the prayers and discourse, every word of which came direct from his heart, made an impression which I have never forgotten to this day.

As a lecturer I once heard him down at Pangbourne, where we were staying with Lady Donaldson, the mother of the Reverend Stuart Donaldson, formerly an Eton master, and now Master of Magdalen College, Cambridge. The subject, which the novelist had chosen for the occasion, was Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," and the effect with which he read the successive stanzas was extraordinarily impressive.

As an actor, George MacDonald sometimes used to give special performances without scenery at Steinway Hall. In these he was ably assisted by members of his

family, by whom all, or nearly all, the parts would be filled. A very beautiful version of the "Pilgrim's Progress" was one of his favourite pieces, while another was "Macbeth," in which he himself enacted the title rôle.

Of all Madame Sterling's songs he was the most devoted to "Caller Herrin'." Very rare were the occasions, when either visited the other, upon which he would not whisper in his Scotch "burr," "Give us 'Caller Herrin', Nettie," upon which, without preparation or accompaniment, the well-known voice would, to his infinite delight, break out into—

Wha'll buy my Caller Herrin'?
They're bonnie fush an' halesome farin'.

A propos of her Scotch songs, she used to tell a delightful story in connexion with Mr. MacDonald's stepmother. It gives, moreover, a good illustration of the intuitive instinct which she possessed. With her there was no need to learn how to sing Scotch songs with the proper Scotch accent and in the proper Scotch spirit. These things came naturally to her in a way which would be hard to explain. "'Specs they growed," like Topsy. In one of her favourite songs, "Up in the Mornin' Early," occurs the line "Nae birdie's lilt on hedge or bush." The last word of this was commonly pronounced "boosh" by the compatriots of Robbie Bur-r-r-ns. In spite of this, however, it seemed somehow to go against her grain to follow their example. In fact, she never could or would pronounce it "boosh," preferring to say "büsh," making it rhyme with the word "brush."

For years this went on. Each Scotchman, when

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asked how to pronounce B-U-S-H, at once replied "Boosh." But in spite of this she remained unconvinced. At last she was rewarded for remaining true to her own idea. On going to sing at Aberdeen, she went to see the novelist's stepmother, who was living there. During conversation the singing and pronouncing of Scotch songs came up, and again the question was started, "How do you pronounce B-U-S-H?" The gratifying and comforting reply came, "Weell, it's just Aberdonian to say 'büsh'."

In 1877 a civil pension was granted to George MacDonald for services rendered to literature. After this he went abroad and made his home on the Italian Riviera. It was, however, his custom to visit England each year and see his old friends. The scenery of Surrey always attracted him, and for two or three summers he occupied "The Nook" at Dorking, where Grant Allen had once lived. In 1898 he came over to reside at Haslemere, and it was in Surrey that his last days were spent.

On the Riviera he lived at Bordighera with his wife and family in a comfortable house, the gift of admirers. Here Antoinette Sterling went to see them whilst on the way to join the liner which was to take her off to Australia upon that ill-fated concert tour, whence she was to return a widow. This is her description of the visit to their home :—

"We drove to Monte Carlo—that living, burning, terrible, respectable hell. What faces! What greed! What excitement! Worse than drunkenness ten thousand times. No wonder the place which they have ready for the suicides is already well filled.

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“ We then went to Venti Miglie, through the loveliest scenery I have ever seen or imagined. Upon arriving we took a fine pair of horses—splendid, well-groomed, with lots of bells, which jingled at every step. The coachman had ear-rings in his ears, and wore a cocked hat. A sweet doggie was rushing on before, always barking, with no stop for breath. After a charming drive we arrived at dear Mr. MacDonald’s home. Like the birds, they builded it up, evolving it from that ‘within’ which is inexhaustible, whether manifested in poetry, prose, music, or any other thing of beauty. It was an ideal house and home. The very vines hugged it close, and grew all over it for love. There was a great living-room, where stood their hospitable table, long and narrow; a couple of fire-places piled up with great logs of wood; a beautiful organ; a piano in the middle of the room, and, on all sides, books. Mrs. MacDonald had learned to play the organ when her sons and daughters were grown up, and she performs most beautifully in the church at Bordighera. It is a privilege and a blessing to be in their home, that sanctuary of love and peace, of refinement, and interesting conversation.

“ At Bordighera I went to the door of the loveliest of little English chapels, to sing my last song in English surroundings before we sailed. Twice I turned back; but finally obeying a something within, I entered and stood behind the organ. Again I returned to my room, but this time I found a bunch of wonderful rosebuds, which had been sent by the clergyman. I rushed over to the church once more, arrived just in time, as their heads were bowed, all kneeling after the benediction,

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and so standing there out of sight I sang, 'The Lord is our Shepherd, we shall not want.'"

Of the letters which were despatched from this Italian home, the following one seems very typical of Mr. MacDonald's poetic nature. It was written in red ink :—

"MY DEAR JOHN AND ANTOINETTE,—We got here last night, and, having no black ink, I am reduced not to my heart's blood, but to the colour of it. The fitter, I hope, for the song I have made for you."

With it was enclosed a very beautiful poem, "written for the heart and voice of Antoinette MacKinlay."

"The last time I ever met dear George MacDonald," my mother writes, "was at a garden party, given by his son, Dr. Greville. There on the lawn stood the beloved poet, dressed all in white. How happy and how proud he looked as he stood in the midst of his family and friends, with those large, searching blue eyes full of benignity and peace, a picture of a serene loving old age."

This was the last meeting of Antoinette Sterling and George MacDonald, two noble natures displaying many similarities. Both were broad-minded in religion and delighted in mysticism; both were simple, loving, generous. Both were fearless in their beliefs, and ready to suffer for the sake of their principles; both did what was right because it *was* right, a reason which was to them all-sufficient. But above all they were alike in speaking and thinking of death as something beautiful, something desirable, something which was not to be feared.

"How strange it seems," George MacDonald once

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said, "to have a fear of Death. Yet we are not frightened at a sunset." The same feeling was expressed in the lines which Antoinette Sterling would so often quote—

Earth is but our Resting-place,
Heaven is our Home.

CHAPTER VII

HER PHILANTHROPIC INTERESTS

ANTOINETTE STERLING was ever known for her large-hearted endeavours to save those around her from temptation, from misery, from themselves. Her Christianity was, indeed, a practical Christianity; her religion a religion not merely of words, but of deeds—slow to condemn, quick to forgive. She was ever ready to offer her sympathy to all. Her very manner seemed to invite the confidence of those who came to tell her of their griefs and cares. She looked upon it as her mission in life to alleviate all pain and distress, so far as it lay in her power to do so. Her heart bled for the anguish of those about her. She wept at their sorrows, she rejoiced in their happiness: while a strange intuition gave her an insight into human nature which was indeed remarkable. Rarely did she go on a railway journey without holding an animated conversation with whosoever happened to be in the same carriage. If more than half an hour were spent there, the tête-à-tête usually resulted in her being made the confidante of all the inmost secrets of their lives—such matters as they would have hesitated to mention even to their nearest friends and relations. Very terrible were the life-tragedies sometimes poured into her sympathetic ear.

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There was something in her own frank, open disposition which seemed to impel those who met her to pour out the sorrows of their hearts. At the end of an hour's talk, they felt as though they had known her since childhood.

With her own love of truth, she could never understand others taking refuge in a falsehood. When any came to her for help, and told a story of their woes, they would be assumed to be speaking the truth, until proved to be doing otherwise. Naturally this led to much imposition ; but "to give at once is to give twice over." Who can tell how many true cases of suffering and despair may have been relieved by this implicit belief in their honesty? By starting, as many people do, with the assumption that any one's story is made up of a pack of lies, and by forthwith investigating the truth of each portion of it before giving any assistance, how often may it turn out that the help, so tardily given, arrives too late? That was the point of view, at any rate, which Antoinette Sterling took up when such cases were brought to her notice. Though by the cold-blooded philosophy of the cynic it may be argued to be a mistaken one, it is a view which cannot but compel the admiration of all.

Similarly, when she signed the pledge, binding herself to total abstinence, her action was prompted purely by philanthropic motives. For herself she was strong and sure of her strength, but there were others too weak perhaps to resist temptation. It was to induce these to follow her example, and be saved from themselves, that she became a teetotaller. Brought up, as has been already narrated, in a home where intoxicating liquor

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was banished from the table, it was natural that when she came over to Europe she should not care to change the habits formed in childhood. She found, however, on arriving in England, that to drink water when dining with friends seemed to savour almost of rudeness. The hot-water craze was unknown at that time, and to refuse wine attracted attention, where nowadays it passes unnoticed. In consequence of this, during her first years over here she used to take champagne and port on special occasions, such as birthdays or Christmas time, when it seemed disagreeable to refuse.

“At last,” my mother writes, “there came a time when I made up my mind that I would never touch another drop of wine. With my puritanical training that resolution was exactly the same to me as taking the pledge. I had a friend, a gifted woman, to whom strong drink was a snare. From being an ardent disciple of the temperance movement I went to the extreme, and for her sake became a ‘total abstainer,’ upon her promising to become one at the same time. It was not, however, until some years after this that I actually signed the pledge. When eventually I took this step, it was quite by chance. I had never thought of such a thing. It had always seemed to me that to pledge one’s word to do anything was exactly the same as swearing to do so, or putting down one’s promise in black and white. Eventually, however, I was shown that there was another point of view. I happened to hear one morning that there was to be a Band of Hope meeting that same day at Exeter Hall. I felt in my heart ‘a leading’ to attend it, though I had not been invited. When I entered the Hall there was a burst

of applause and welcome from the people. Later on I learned the reason of their excitement. Two of the principal speakers had disappointed them, and the committee had felt that they must leave the meeting to God, and He would provide for it. I sang and spoke just as I was 'led' to do throughout the afternoon. At last one of the leading speakers asked me whether I would not sign the pledge. It would, he said, be such an encouragement to the children. I had not thought of that before, and very gladly affixed my name then and there."

After this Madame Sterling identified herself very strongly with the temperance movement, and attended all the principal meetings. Lady Henry Somerset, the President of the W.W.C.T.U. (the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union), and the late Miss Frances Willard, secretary of the association, became her firm friends; nor was it ever in vain that they asked her assistance at their meetings. During the great temperance festival, which was given at the Royal Albert Hall some ten years back, she attended all the gatherings, which continued for a whole week. Not only did she sing repeatedly, but she made many speeches in support of the cause so close at heart. On several occasions, moreover, she went down to stay with Lady Henry at Eastnor Castle, in order to help in the good work which was being carried on at Duxhurst, the Industrial Farm Colony for inebriate women.

Her interests were not confined to the temperance cause alone. The Church Army had great claims on her sympathy, so that the evangelistic secretary, Mr. Edward Clifford, and the founder, the Rev. W. Carlile,

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never failed to find in her a willing helper. Nor were her active services less freely given to such philanthropic work as that carried on by Lord Kinnaird with the Young Men's Christian Association, Quintin Hogg, the father of the Polytechnic, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, General Booth, Passmore Edwards, the College for the Blind, and Pearson's Fresh Air Fund. Her religious thought was ever one of broadest toleration. Her readings ranged from the Bible to Buddhism, from Spurgeon's sermons to Christian Science. In spite of being a Quaker she was attached to the Nonconformists, while she was equally devoted to Theosophy and the books of Annie Besant. The Rev. Newman Hall was always a great friend. By special invitation she attended the farewell gathering when he retired from a pastorate which had lasted for half a century. He was seventy-six years old, and had been at his post in one church for no less than thirty-eight years.

"During the meeting," she writes, "he seemed to be trying to swallow down that lump of sadness and regret that seeks to choke the breaking up of mortal relationships and connexions of any kind. It is like an anchor holding the ship in one place, either in a haven or in a chance spot, when an accident to the engines renders it necessary suddenly to stop the way of the big vessel, just as it causes a stoppage of our engine, the heart. After Newman Hall had made his farewell address, I stood up and sang 'The Lord is our Shepherd.' (I have always refused to render it 'The Lord is *my* Shepherd'; it seems to have such a strangely self-satisfied egotistical sound.) It was the Master's message to His flock. The effect upon the listeners was sublimely

touching, and could only have been sent of the Father, our Helper in times of need, our Strength in moments of weakness, our Joy in hours of hope."

Her religion was intensely matter-of-fact. She did not shut it up in a cupboard for six days to be brought out on the seventh with a flourish of trumpets and a miniature prayer book, of handy size, bound in sweet-smelling russia leather. Her religion was with her in everyday life, and was infinitely practical. A good illustration of this will be found in the following story which shows her attitude in such matters.

One Sunday evening Antoinette Sterling happened to meet an old friend, a well-known clergyman, and noticed that he was in great distress. Upon inquiring the cause, she was informed that before he had left for church his wife had swallowed a bonnet pin. He could not possibly stay with her, as service was about to commence, so he had sent for a doctor. How he had conducted the service he did not know. The contralto at once said that she would accompany him back. On arriving at the house they were told that the invalid had gone up to bed and was not to be disturbed. In spite of this injunction, they hastened upstairs and found her lying down. "And so your wife has swallowed a pin? Don't you think God is greater than a pin?" The clergyman hesitated a little. He had never thought of it quite in that light. "But it was a *big* pin." "O, you think God could have managed a small one?" More hesitation. "But it had a large ball on the end." "Ah, *now* I see what is the matter! God could have managed it all right if it had only been an *ordinary* pin. It is the large ball that has been too much for Him."

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This novel way of putting the case so amused the cleric and his wife that they began to smile. In a few minutes the sufferer said she felt better and would get up. She did so, and no harm ever came of it. If it had not been for that chance meeting outside the church, the poor woman would have been placed in the hands of a surgeon, who would have proceeded to cut her open to find the pin. Indeed her doctor had already said that this would have to be done. All of which would have been a great pity, for the missing pin was discovered next day without any operation beyond that of looking on the floor. It had not been swallowed at all.

It was the broad-mindedness of Antoinette Sterling which united her in bonds of such close sympathy with Lady Mount Temple. As Georgina Cowper, the latter had once caused great consternation amongst those acquaintances who were, like herself, interested in hospital work, by giving rosaries to the Roman Catholic patients. This trait in the character of Lady Mount Temple and of her husband lent an ineffable charm to the environment of their Hampshire home. "Broadlands," near the town of Romsey, had been the birthplace and home of Lord Palmerston. Many were the important political conferences which took place within its walls. Upon his death the old place passed into the possession of his stepson, the Hon. William Cowper, afterwards created Lord Mount Temple. A few years later it became notable for the remarkable religious conferences held there.

These originated in the suggestion of some Quaker friends, the Piersall-Smiths. Coming over from America,

Mr. and Mrs. Smith had brought with them the idea of holding camp-meetings. Of these we had some experience upon going down one early autumn to stay with them at Haslemere. Their home was not far from Aldworth, where Lord Tennyson lived in a house of his own design. Walking over in that direction one afternoon I passed the poet, who was strolling through one of the little country lanes near his home. On the day after our arrival, Hannah Smith, as Mrs. Piersall-Smith was always called, proposed having a camp-meeting in the evening, and in the suggestion her guests joyfully acquiesced. Their house stood in its own grounds, which were extensive and finely wooded.

To a clearing amongst the trees we accordingly made our way after dinner. Here we found a big wood fire burning merrily. Logs were lying around, and on these some of the party seated themselves, whilst others, preferring Mother Earth's comfortable lap, disposed themselves at ease upon the rugs which had been brought to make it still softer. Then commenced an informal entertainment, to which all in turn contributed according to the best of their ability. Stories of strange experiences were interspersed with humorous anecdotes, recitations, and music. As the shadows of night deepened, the trees around grew darker and less clearly defined, until finally they became lost in one pitchy background. During this change the fire seemed to burn with ever-increasing brightness, and to throw a warmer, redder glow over the faces and figures of those around. The scene was one which lingered in the memory. It would have made an effective picture. At eleven o'clock the proceedings were brought to a close by a few words of a more serious

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nature from our hostess, followed by a song from Antoinette Sterling. Her choice fell on "The Sheep-fold," and this was given with an eerie effect upon the little band of listeners, who sat, almost invisible to each other, grey indefinite shapes around the dying embers of the log fire.

One of the most delightful and uncommon features of the Piersall-Smiths' home was a diminutive house which would have enchanted J. M. Barrie. In the grounds stood three trees—erect, stately, and of imposing height. They were equidistant, and formed a triangle. At the foot of one of the trunks was the beginning of a fragile spiral staircase. On climbing this, leaving the ground far behind, and feeling like some second giant killer, one arrived at last at a little triangular summer-house, built among the tree-tops. Windows stretched along the whole length of each side, from which one caught a wonderful bird's-eye view of the surrounding scenery. Here Mr. Smith was wont to betake himself each day, for, in true Quaker fashion, he loved to "sit in the silence."

Similarly, Jacob Bright, brother of the great John Bright, used to relate how, when they were children, their father's only religious teaching to John and himself had been to have them "sit in the silence" by his side each day for half an hour, "taught of God." Indeed, throughout life it was John Bright's custom to reserve a short time daily, which he would spend alone in thought.

When the Piersall-Smiths were lunching one day with Mr. and Mrs. Cowper, as the Mount Temples then were, conversation turned upon American camp-

meetings. The Quakeress extolled them loudly. "Why should we not have them in England?" asked Mrs. Cowper. "Oh, I guess your climate would not suit." "But surely it would in the summer. Let us try to have one at Broadlands!" The idea seemed feasible, and in the following July there took place the first of those famous open-air religious conferences, which continued annually till Lord Mount Temple's death, fifteen years later. For much of the description of those days at Broadlands I am indebted to the kindness of my godfather, Mr. Edward Clifford, who was one of the moving spirits at the meetings.

"The first conference," he writes, "lasted from the 16th to the 21st of July, 1874. Robert Piersall-Smith directed it with a tact which was marvellous. Such hosts as Mr. and Mrs. Cowper I do not think I shall ever know again. The meetings began at eight o'clock in the morning, and lasted, with intervals for feasting and converse, all through the day till bedtime. We sat in the shade under the beech trees, with sun and sky shining through the branches, and the wood-pigeons cooing all around. The sense of a Divine Presence was wonderfully real. Probably it was a crisis in the life of nearly every one present. The sight of the people sitting or walking about in little groups, the joyful discovery, which continually recurred, that some one had passed into new and bright experiences, and the delight of learning that persons from whom we had been separated by wretched party feeling were beautiful souls able to bring fresh life to us (as we, perhaps, to them), all combined to raise us into a region that was more than earthly. Mr. Cowper himself seemed in his natural element, radiant with light and happiness, perfect in humility and kindness, and tender in his prayers."

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Antoinette Sterling was always particularly in harmony with the atmosphere of Broadlands. She delighted to take part in the meetings, contributing a song when occasion seemed to call for music, or speaking from the heart some few words, which appealed at once to the minds of her listeners.

Among those who used to come to Romsey to attend the conferences were such men as Canon Wilkinson, Morley, a zealous philanthropist, J. W. Farquhar, one of the keenest intellects of his time, and Basil Wilberforce, as yet scarcely known to the country at large, but already moving men with his stirring eloquence. George MacDonald was present for many years in succession, as were Russell Gurney, the eminent statesman, Arthur Staunton, Boyd Carpenter (now Bishop of Ripon), and Keith Falconer, the young giant, who died in Arabia, after consecrating his life to mission work among the sheikhs. A prominent figure also was Amanda Smith, the negress, with tall figure, gleaming teeth, and a resonant voice, by which she touched the hearts of all. Then there were Lady Waterford, the greatest beauty of her time, and one of the finest women artists ; Miss Yonge, teller of welcome stories ; Lady Darnley, with her restful atmosphere and keen perceptions ; and Lady Gainsborough, of saintly appearance, with the weight of years upon her, and a face whose smile was always so exquisitely tender. With her would come Louisa, Lady Ashburton, beloved for that generous heart, beating strong and quick, which made her friendship so cherished a gift.

I remember going several times to spend the evening at her Kensington home, Kent House. In the dining-

room were hanging those two magnificent Van Dyck's for which offers of anything from ten to twenty thousand pounds had repeatedly been made, only to be refused. Thence we would pass through the large entrance hall, and up the staircase hardly sufficiently lighted to suit those who wished to gaze upon the beauties of the pictures which one passed. In the drawing-room, the time would pass all too quickly in listening to Lady Ashburton's memories of Ruskin and of the Carlyles, whom she had known so well. Again one heaved an involuntary sigh of regret that the room should remain in that state of dim religious light, when about one were the famous "Tondo" of Botticelli and other examples of early Italian art ready to delight the eye.

Of Lord and Lady Mount Temple themselves how can one find words to speak? I went many times with my mother and father to stay at Broadlands. Through the vista of passing years those visits appear like sojourns in some spot far removed from the rest of the world. Their home had, indeed, an air of fairy enchantment which cast a spell over all who entered.

On arriving at the Romsey station one would find the carriage waiting to drive the guests along the country lanes to the old lodge. Admitted through the iron gates, one passed into the deep shade of a road over-spread with thick branches of cedar and of ilex, and on through a noble park, till one came in sight of the east side of the house. Inside all was home-like and filled with a wondrous sense of peace. From the drawing-room low windows looked out on to a lawn, whose slopes led the eye to that winding river down whose

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swift stream I used at dusk sometimes to float in a punt, whilst indulging in the precarious sport of eel spearing. It called for much patience and an infinite trust in the guiding hand of Providence.

Upon the lawn grew planes, cedars, and elms, while one tall cypress towered over all his fellows. To the left lay a cluster of beeches, while on the other side of the stream were long stretches of meadow. Beyond these, again, appeared the beginning of the New Forest.

The dining-room was a cosy spot. At one end hung a picture by Giorgione, representing a compact between two noble families. Over the fireplace was a Tintoretto, upon the beauties of which Ruskin loved to expatiate. Opposite to the Giorgione was Romney's portrait of Lady Hamilton, and through the windows one caught a glimpse of silvery fountains, lawns, and gardens, which testified to the work of skilful hands.

In her youth Lady Mount Temple had been considered extremely lovely, with bright waving hair and a figure so slight that it seemed as though a breath might blow her away. It was in those days that John Ruskin, who was afterwards to become so eminent an authority upon Art, discovered in her his "Egeria." One may read the story in "Præterita." When in Rome he was found by his parents to be very restive about attending church. After a while, however, he became more docile. They imagined he was getting fond of church music. But they were mistaken. What attracted him was the chance of seeing for an instant above the bowed heads of the Italian worshippers the face of an English girl—Miss Tollemache. She was that year admitted queen of beauty among Italian society, and excelled in

that kind of loveliness which he had hitherto only dreamed of as possible, but had never seen—statuesque severity joined with womanly sweetness. It was not until fourteen years later, when Ruskin had become a celebrity and Miss Tollemache had married Mr. William Cowper, that he was introduced to her. It was through the kindness of his “Egeria” that he was afterwards welcomed to Broadlands by Lord Palmerston, to whom Mr. Cowper acted as confidential secretary.

Such had Lady Mount Temple been in her younger days. She had already reached the age of fifty, when my mother came to know her. It was about ten years after this that I recall seeing the sweet Lady Mount Temple for the first time. No wonder Watts was proud to make a study of her. Her figure was stately, and her face had a winning smile. Her hair was silvered, and had almost the look of a halo. Her eyes were of a very light grey colour—mystic and full of gentleness; her hands characteristic, and in shape almost Botticellian; the face often pale, and wearied and full of lines. Her life was ever at the beck and call of sufferers, and the hours spent by her in those rooms of sickness were bound to be a drain upon her vitality. But, as her expression grew animated, and other thoughts came to draw her mind from the pathetic scenes which she had witnessed, her face would flush up, the pathetic look give way to happiness, and the wrinkles vanish almost miraculously.

The last time I ever saw her was fourteen years after that first visit. A widow now, ever mourning for him whom she had lost, her beloved Broadlands, with all its happy associations, passed into the hands of Sir Evelyn

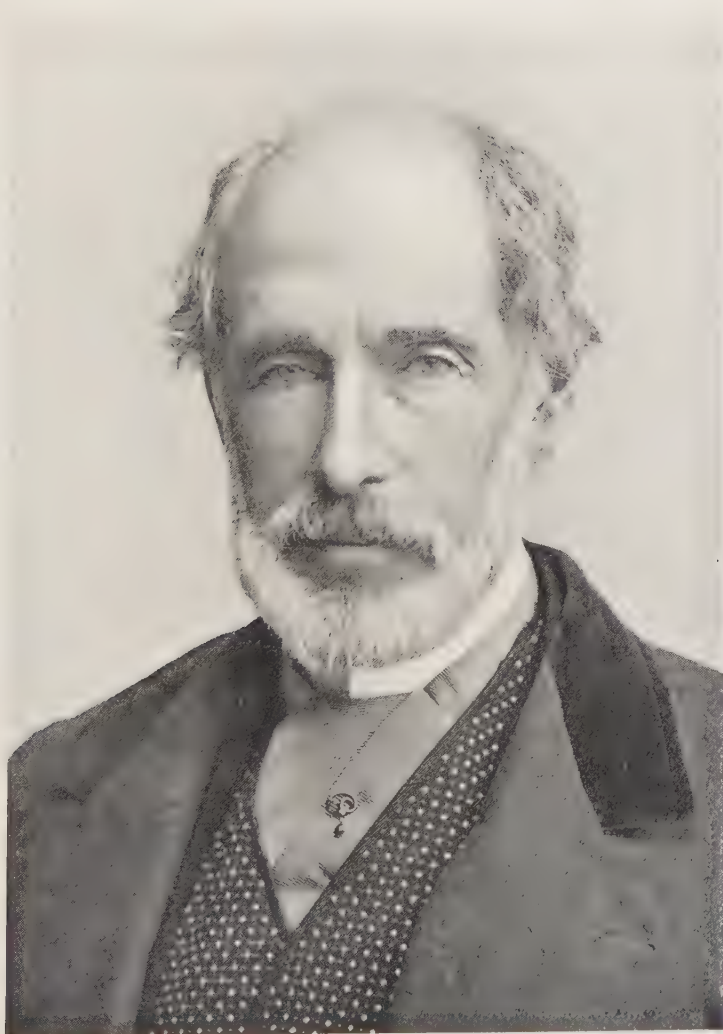


Photo by J. Russell and Sons, Baker Street, London, W.

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Mount Temple

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Ashley, she was living at her Devonshire home, Babbi-combe Cliff. By this time her poor body had become bent and crippled. Her hair was white, her face aged with suffering and increasing years, her utterance, alas! grown indistinct. But the angelic sweetness was still there, and to it had been added a repose and serenity which seemed to show that what her body had lost in strength, her spirit had gained. Antoinette Sterling sang "Rest in the Lord" to her and to the servants, whom, with sweet thought, she had asked her adopted daughter, Juliet, to summon. Then, after a little conversation, we left. In passing from the room I turned and saw her lying on a long deck-chair in "Wonderland," by which name her room was known, a figure of infinite gentleness and pathos. As one looked one felt that she was not long for this world, and that we should never see her again.

Lord Mount Temple, my godfather, was known to the outside world as a Liberal statesman, more especially in relation to his "Cowper-Temple Clause" and the part which he took in such matters as pure literature, prevention of cruelty to animals, and many kinds of religious and philanthropic work. The gardens in the public parks are of his instituting. He was, moreover, an ardent temperance advocate, and some years before his death became a total abstainer. He was slender, but wonderfully active for his age. His hair was grey, and there was an inclination to baldness. The beard and moustache were nearly white. He had beautiful Van Dyck-like hands, a delicate skin, and light blue eyes, the windows through which one caught a glimpse of a soul pure and noble. His manner was alert and sympathetic,

and he talked well, while his absolute kindness made it possible for him to be very frank with opponents. The airy, naïve way in which he would set himself to demolish the favourite theories of some orthodox companion was quite unique. Every morning the household and guests would assemble in the little private chapel, and the child-like earnest prayer which he uttered could not but stir the listeners to deep emotion.

We were staying in the house on the evening when he was taken ill, and left the dinner-table to go upstairs, never to return alive. On the afternoon of that day he had taken me for a long walk in the grounds, speaking of the difficulties which must be met in life, and urging many kindly counsels. Little did I think that it would be the last time Lord Mount Temple would ever be out of doors. We returned in time to dress for dinner. During the meal he was suddenly seized with shivering and faintness, and, leaning upon the arm of his wife, left the room. That was the last time we saw him. Next day the party broke up, and all the guests departed from Broadlands. I remember, as though it were but yesterday, standing outside the door of his bedroom waiting to say good-bye to Lady Mount Temple, who had hardly left his side for an instant since she had assisted him upstairs. The final scene is thus described by Antoinette Sterling:—

“On the night of the 16th of October, I was suddenly awakened. There at the foot of my bed, between the curtains, stood the figure of Lord Mount Temple, smiling at me, and holding the curtain with one hand. I felt at once that he had passed up higher, and I knew that his spirit had come to bid me go and comfort dear

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Lady Mount Temple. Sure enough in the morning a telegram came with the sad news. Each night after the concert, for the tour was going on day after day, I journeyed to Broadlands. From the town where I was singing I would take a train to Southsea, arrive there at two or three in the morning, go on early after a few hours' sleep, and spend the day with the dear Lady at Romsey. And there came unto us the Angel of Comfort and Sympathy.

"On the day of the funeral I was so impressed to sing before the mourners saw the coffin in the Abbey, that I spoke to Sir Evelyn Ashley on the subject. I was, however, engaged to sing on that same evening, and so would have to leave the town by a certain train, in order to arrive at my destination in time for the concert. Sir Evelyn felt that I was quite right, and when he found that the time was getting short, he descended from the carriage and told the coachman to whip up the horses, giving further orders for the hearse to be drawn along faster, a sight which I should think had not been seen before. Canon Wilberforce, who was to perform the last rites, understood why it was best that I should sing before the actual service commenced. I therefore stood on the altar steps and gave, without any accompaniment, 'The Lord is our Shepherd.' Romsey Abbey was full of mourners, and here and there I saw some of the Horse Guards, the regiment to which Lord Mount Temple had belonged. It was an impressive sight. I could not wait to hear the rest of the service, for I had to hurry off immediately, in order to catch the train and join the rest of the concert party."

The contralto always liked, when possible, to sing

either "The Lord is our Shepherd" or "Rest in the Lord" at the last ceremony, in the case of any one who had been specially dear to her. By doing so she felt that she might to some degree alleviate the sorrow of the relatives by banishing the sense of irretrievable loss. It was her desire to arouse in them the feelings with which she herself regarded death, as a passing from the dream of life upon earth to the reality of existence in the after-world. One of these occasions was the funeral of Jean Ingelow, the poetess, whose writings, being in so many instances cast in a religious and introspective mould, had strongly appealed to her.

Theirs was a long friendship, in which the deep love and admiration which they held each for the other was in strong evidence. Antoinette Sterling describes the first meeting in the following words:—

"One day my husband came home and said that he had been to see Jean Ingelow about some words of hers which he wanted to get set for me. I was wildly excited, and said that I was going off to see her that very moment, and should just hug and kiss her. He replied quietly, 'Jean Ingelow is not one to be hugged and kissed immediately.' But he took me there, and I *did* hug and kiss her in spite of a very quiet, stately dignity. Soon, I am proud to say, we became deeply attached to each other in spite of our different characters, and her two brothers used to complete a joyous and merry quartet.

"Oh, that lovely quaint garden of hers, with its partition of trees half-way down! There was a mass of bushes at the lower end, and everywhere grew a wealth of old-fashioned flowers. As for the house—well, it

always seemed to me like a cosy nest—something exactly fitted for the sweet owner. That day was almost as exciting as the one on which I was first taken to see dear Mrs. Craik (Dinah Muloch), the authoress of ‘John Halifax, Gentleman.’

“Mrs. M—— had written to ask whether I would like to go with her to Mrs. Craik’s home. I wrote by return of post to say it had always been my greatest wish. Next morning we started off for Shortlands, a small town about an hour away from London. At the station I saw an open wagonette, with dark blue cushions, and two fine chestnut horses waiting to take us to that exciting spot where I was to meet the heroine whom, from her writings, I had loved ever since I had been a young girl. At last we reached her home. As we drove up to the house we saw standing in the doorway a tall, sweet-looking woman with an oval head and greyish hair, almond-shaped very full blue-grey eyes, heavy light - coloured eyelashes, and beautiful long taper-fingered hands. She put her arms around me and kissed me. After a few minutes, leaving the others, she hurried me out through the trees into a corner strangely hemmed in, and, taking both my hands, said, ‘Sing! sing!’ I sang, and from that hour dear, beloved ‘John Halifax’ and I were tender, loving friends.

“I have been told that once upon a time there was a terrible accident to a train coming from the North. A young man from Scotland was very badly injured. No one knew him, but he always kept calling out for Miss Muloch. Hearing of this, ‘John Halifax’ went to see the stranger who appeared to long for her presence so

much, and found that his name was George Lillie Craik. She sent at once for his people, and took him to her home close by. Here he lay dangerously ill for many months. The story ended in this case as all romantic incidents of this description invariably do in the novels—the two were finally made one, living in a sweet home at Shortlands in the midst of the most lovely woods and fields.”

Mr. Craik became in later years a partner in the firm of Macmillan’s, and passed away only recently.

One of the great desires of Antoinette Sterling’s married life was that a daughter should be born to her. Of this she used often to talk with Miss Muloch, and would add that she wanted her, when she arrived, to have blue eyes.

At last her wish was gratified. A daughter was born, and received the name of Jean, chosen as a tribute of affection to Jean Ingelow. When next Mrs. Craik came to the house, her first words of greeting were, “And so the little girl has come at last! Tell me, has she got blue eyes?” There was a smiling affirmative, whereupon, with a look of great tenderness, in which there was visible a tinge of sadness, as though the good fortune had aroused some buried memory, the authoress gave her a kiss, and said, “My dear, you are the only woman I have ever known whose wish has been fully gratified.”

Another writer who was a very great friend of Antoinette Sterling was Bret Harte. His life was one which, for variety, would be hard to beat. He started as a schoolmaster in California, but failing in this went in for mining. Then he was, in turn, gold-digger,

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coach-guard, drug-dispenser, trooper, staff officer, composer, journalist, editor, poet, novelist, lecturer, consul, and dramatist. Among his literary contributions, "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," and "The Heathen Chinees" were writings which will live for many decades. When he came to settle in London, at Lancaster Gate, he was a constant visitor at our house. Of the many letters which he sent to my mother, the following shows the charming manner in which he turned his phrases, even though he wrote but of an invitation to dine :—

"MY DEAR MADAME STERLING,—Your simple request would be potent enough to bring me to any dinner, excepting a *public* dinner ! This I always avoid, and, indeed, have already declined the Anglo-American one. Surely we can renew acquaintance without a brass band, speeches, and formal toast. Indeed, I can remember when a single song from you was all-sufficient, and I'd rather look forward to the chance of meeting you again over a cup of tea or a plain bun than at all the Anglo-American or any other combination or hyphen dinners that may be given."

Another delightful letter ran thus :—

"Many thanks for your kind suggestion about seeing the supper at Christ's Hospital. I'm afraid that I'm getting too old to go back to the time of Edward IV with any satisfaction, and the weather is still too cold for me to contemplate these bareheaded, imperfectly clad 'Blue-coat' boys with equanimity. Some other time, when it is warmer, we'll go together."

One evening, when he was dining at the house, he was informed that she had a song after his own heart. A

Quaker friend had shown her the words, but did not know who had written them, nor had any one been able to find out. Scott Gatty had given them a sublime setting which had been only just completed, and she was going to sing them so that he might be the first ever to hear the music. It was all about "the poor lost sheep of the sheepfold." "Why, I know the poem quite well," replied Bret Harte, and at once repeated it from beginning to end. It transpired that Charles Dana, of the "New York Sun," had sent them to him six years before, so that they might be set to music. He had never seen about it, and it seemed as though Providence had made him wait.

The mention of poems recalls an episode which the contralto used to relate. In the days when she was singing at Henry Ward Beecher's church, one of the congregation, an old gentleman of seventy, once waited behind to speak to her after the service, and said that he had something which he thought would interest her. He then told her that he had been an intimate friend of John Howard Payne, the writer of "Home, Sweet Home." From him he had received the words of two extra verses, which had been added to the song later, and had never been published. Thereupon he handed her a copy which ran as follows:—

Third verse

How sweet 'tis to sit 'neath a fond father's smile,
And the cares of a mother to soothe and beguile.
Let others delight 'mid new pleasures to roam:
But give me, O give me, the pleasures of Home!

Home—Home—Sweet, sweet Home!

But give me—ah! give me, the pleasures of Home!

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Fourth verse

To thee I'll return overburdened with care—
The heart's dearest solace will smile on me there!
No more from that cottage again will I roam :
Be it ever so humble, there's no place like Home!

Home—Home—Sweet, sweet Home!

There's no place like Home,

There's no place like Home !

J. H. P.

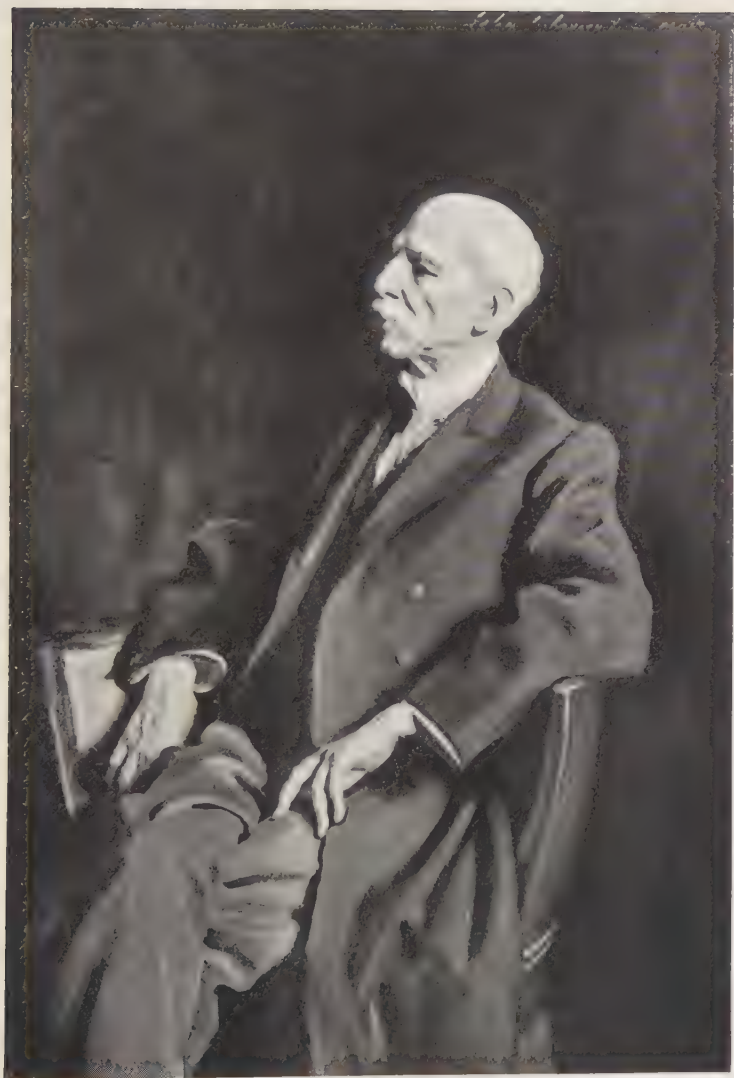
Home, sweet Home! How truly the words expressed her feelings. She was never so happy as in her own home. When it was decided that she should undertake a concert tour in Australia which would involve her being absent from England for half a year, the wrench of parting was a grievous one. Then came the blow which fell upon her with cruel force in Australia—the death of her husband, followed by a return alone, to find herself obliged to give up the home in Stanhope Place which had been so dear. Of these things and of her last years it is needless to write. They were years of care, of anxiety, and of one overwhelming grief, which was only felt the more keenly because she sought to hide it beneath a smiling exterior. But all who knew her intimately were aware that the loss sustained by her had cast a deep shadow over her life, which time could not wipe out or even alleviate.

Here the writer must bring to an end what claims to be no more than a very slight sketch of the career and personality of one who was ever the truest of friends and the kindest and best of mothers. It is not for him to undertake anything in the nature of a proper memoir of her life. To do justice to that with all its beauty, its grandness, and its intense simplicity, calls for the

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display of literary talents which he does not possess. The chapters cannot, perhaps, be better concluded than with an anagram which was sent by a stranger at the close of the visit to Australia. It was obtained from the letters of the three words "Madame Antoinette Sterling," and is indeed a sentiment applicable to her whole life work—

"List t'me, a great Amen intoned."



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Manuel Garcia

THE CENTENARY PORTRAIT OF SEÑOR MANUEL GARCIA

BY JOHN S. SARGENT

Specially signed, at the author's request, six weeks before the Maestro's
Hundred and First Birthday

CHAPTER VIII

THE GARCIA FAMILY

A CENTURY !

It seems incredible to those who have had the privilege of knowing Señor Manuel Garcia that this can be his age. Yet, full of vitality as he is, it is true.

What a unique link with the past !

On 17 March, 1905, the maestro entered on his hundred and first year. It is hard to realize all that this implies, and some of the facts which follow from it appear to a musician almost beyond belief. Giovanni Anzani, from whom he received his first lessons in singing, was born some hundred and fifty odd years ago, when Bach was still alive, and Handel but a short time dead ! He himself came into the world at a time when Beethoven and Schubert were still young men, Chopin and Mendelssohn not even born ; and he was a full-blown operatic baritone when Gounod, Wagner, and Verdi were schoolboys.

There are a few dates in connexion with his life which will perhaps bring his astounding age more vividly before the mind of the reader than the mention of such names as the above.

This Grand Old Man of the musical world was born at Zafra, in Catalonia, in the year 1805. As he was ushered

into the world Napoleon was at the very zenith of his power, and was preparing for an invasion of England. Seven months later the battle of Trafalgar was won, and England mourned the loss of the heroic Nelson. During the first four years of his life, such events took place as the death of William Pitt, the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, the battle of Jena, the passing in England of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the French invasion of Portugal, the rising of the Spaniards against the intruders, the sending of help by England, the arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley, and the commencement of the Peninsular War. He was ten years old when the battle of Waterloo was fought, at which the mighty despot of France suffered his final eclipse. Over eighty years ago he was singing the leading high baritone rôles in Italian opera, one of his greatest successes being achieved in the part of Figaro, the Barber of Seville. In 1830 he retired from public singing, and began his career as a teacher of singing. In 1840 he submitted to the French Institute his famous "*Mémoire sur la voix humaine.*"

At the middle of the last century, after having been through the French Revolution, he resigned his Professorship at the Paris Conservatoire to come over and settle in England, which has since then remained his permanent home. Five years later he gave to the world his wonderful invention the Laryngoscope, which, according to Sir Felix Semon, one of the leading throat doctors, has, since its discovery, benefited, either directly or indirectly, three per cent. of the entire human race. He was already over fifty years of age when there took place such events as the Crimean War, the Indian

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Mutiny, the Accession of William I to the throne of Prussia, with Prince Bismarck as his chief adviser, the American Civil War, and the marriage of King Edward to the beautiful Princess of the Royal House of Denmark ; while he was in his sixty-first year when Lord Palmerston died. The Franco-Prussian War and the siege of Paris are to him quite modern history.

It is natural, but none the less astounding, that on more than one occasion there have come for lessons pupils whose parents and grandparents before them have studied under him. Still more surprising is it that he has seen England ruled by five successive sovereigns. When he was born, George III was still on the throne.

While relating some of the stories told concerning Manuel Garcia, his friends and pupils, one cannot help feeling what a loss it has been to music-lovers, and to the world at large, that the great maestro has never been prevailed upon to write some reminiscences of his career and of that galaxy of famous men and women with whom he has been brought into contact.

Señor Garcia's father, the elder Manuel Garcia, was born at Seville in 1775—that is to say, over a hundred and thirty years ago.

One result of a few years' training under Manuel the second is that casual queries as to what people were doing seventy years previously, or where their father lived a hundred years ago, seem the most ordinary small-talk. Moreover, it gives one quite a different way of looking on the age of one's fellow-men. Sixty-five seems but the beginning of a man's prime. To talk of retiring at seventy-five appears merely ridiculous. As for a man giving up dinner parties simply because

he is eighty years old, why, it is inconceivable. Involuntarily one compares these things with the maestro's doings—his going up the Nile at the age of ninety-six, playing the piano, teaching, and singing at ninety-eight—with only one possible result.

His father's name was originally Manuel Vicente del Popolo Rodriguez, "Garcia" being taken as a *nom de guerre*. The fame of the new one soon eclipsed the old, and was adopted by the family as their regular surname. It is curious to hear that at the time the elder Garcia was born the town of Seville could not boast a single piano. At the age of six he became a chorister in the Cathedral, and this was the beginning of a career which proved to be of an exceptionally varied character. Not only did he make a great name as a singer and a teacher, but he was an excellent musician, and no less brilliant as conductor and composer. In the latter capacity he turned out forty-two operas, and in many instances wrote his own libretto. He was, in fact, what certainly in those days was something of a *rara avis*—a fine singer who was an equally fine musician. Señor Garcia relates how Rossini said to him one day in Paris, "If your father had had as much '*savoir-faire*' as he had '*savoir-musical*,' he would have been the foremost composer of his time."

At the age of seventeen the elder Garcia made his début at Cadiz in an operetta, into which a number of his own compositions had been introduced. Not long after this he sang at Madrid with equal success, and thenceforward was recognized as one of the greatest tenors of his generation. In 1805, the year in which his son Manuel was born, he wrote "El Poeta

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Calculista," which met with high praise, and was produced in Paris four years later. In this first appeared the song which soon became one of the most popular melodies of Spain, "Yo che son contrabandista." A reputation, such as was to be gained in his native country, did not satisfy his ambitious nature. Accordingly he set out for Paris, where in 1808 he made a successful début in the opera of "Griselda." Three years later he undertook a tour in Italy, and eventually in 1812 settled down in Naples with his family, to which there had been an addition, namely Maria Felicità, who was at this time barely four years old, but was afterwards to become one of the greatest operatic vocalists of any period as the immortal Mme. Malibran. Here he devoted much time to a thorough study of the art of singing under his friend and master Anzani. Meanwhile he had been appointed by Murat, King of Naples, to the post of principal tenor in his private choir, and he was, of course, engaged for the opera. The maestro gave one day a description of his father's appearance at the Naples Opera House.

Before the elder Garcia set out for his first rehearsal, he had come to the conclusion that it would be a splendid thing if he could hit upon some way of proving to the members of the orchestra that he was not one of the ordinary small fry possessed of a voice and little else. He wanted to gain their respect both as a musician and as a singer. This is how he managed to accomplish his desire.

His opening aria in the opera to be rehearsed was in the key of E flat. The orchestra played the introductory bars, and waited with a casual interest for the new

singer's opening phrase. The tenor commenced, but, instead of doing so in the key in which they were playing, he began to sing a semitone higher, in E natural. At first they were horrified at the discords which resulted. Gradually, however, as the aria went on and the vocalist still sang exactly a semitone above the key in which they were playing, it began to dawn upon them that, instead of being sharp through nervousness or lack of ear, he was keeping throughout the piece a half-tone too high intentionally. Consequently, when they heard him continue in E natural, without a moment's hesitation, or a single false note (for so great a musician was he that he could abstract himself entirely from his surroundings and from the sound of the instruments), their disgust turned to surprise, then admiration, and finally enthusiasm. When the aria was concluded, there was an enormous burst of applause, and the wildest excitement among them all, for they saw what a really great singer they had found in this new-comer. Of course, he sang the remainder of his part in the proper key, but by this novel entry he won the lasting respect of his comrades.

As a tenor he was probably one of the greatest that ever existed. In the course of a long career upon the operatic stage he had the honour of creating a number of important parts, out of which none was more applauded than Almaviva in Rossini's "Barber of Seville." Among his most successful performances were those given in "Otello" and "Don Giovanni." His *forte* lay in the rendition of the lighter and more florid music, his voice being remarkable for its extraordinary flexibility.

Among the old composers it used to be customary to

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write what might almost be called a mere outline or suggestion of the voice part. Particularly was this the case when there was a return to the original theme, while it applied equally to the conventional ending found in nearly all the arie of that time. The singers were expected to elaborate the simple melody given them, and to raise upon this foundation a graceful edifice, adorned with what ornaments their individual taste dictated, and suited to their own powers of execution. The following illustration will prove the truth of the above assertion. It is a story from the lips of the maestro.

When the elder Garcia was at Naples, one of the old Italian composers came to produce a new opera. At the opening rehearsal the tenor was given his part to read at sight. When his first aria had been reached, he sang it off with perfect phrasing and feeling, but exactly note for note as written. After he had finished, the composer said, "Thank you, Signor, very nice, but that was not at all what I wanted." He asked for an explanation, and was informed that the melody which had been written down was intended as merely a skeleton which the singer should clothe with whatever his imagination and artistic instinct prompted. The writer of the music asked him to go through it again, and this time to treat it exactly as though it were his own composition. The elder Garcia was skilful at improvising. Consequently, in giving the aria for the second time he made a number of alterations and additions, introducing runs, trills, roulades, and cadenzas, all of which were performed with the most brilliant execution. This time, when the end of the music was reached, the old composer shook

him warmly by the hand. "Bravo ! Magnificent ! *That* was my music, as I wished it to be given."

It was at Naples that Maria Garcia made her first public appearance at the age of six, playing a part in the opera of "Agnese." In 1816 the elder Garcia left Italy and settled down in Paris with his family, whose number was soon increased by the birth of a second daughter, Michelle Pauline, who was also destined to become a great opera singer, under the name of Mme. Viardot-Garcia. While living in the French capital the younger Manuel, having already had some grounding in singing from the Neapolitan teacher Anzani, continued to work at his voice under the guidance of his father, and at the same time studied harmony under Fétis.

In 1825 he visited England with his father and his sister Maria, who forthwith made her first appearance in this country at the age of seventeen. In the autumn of the same year the family crossed the ocean and inaugurated in New York the first season of Italian Opera given in the New World. The company consisted of the elder Garcia, his son who was now twenty, his daughter Maria, Crinelli, d'Angrisani, Rosich, and Mme. Barbieri. New York was at that time a city of but 150,000 inhabitants, and the old Puritan influences were so strong that no operatic performances were allowed on Saturday nights lest they should interfere with the preparations for Sunday.

The season opened on 29 November, and on this occasion was given the first American performance of the "Barber of Seville," with the elder Garcia as Almaviva, Maria as Rosina, and Manuel as the gay Figaro. During the ensuing winter Edmund Kean was in New York, and

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came round one evening specially to congratulate Garcia *père* upon his performance in "Otello." On 26 May of the following year, the American *première* of Mozart's "Don Giovanni" took place, with the younger Garcia in the part of Leporello, and at the end of September the season was brought to a close. After this, father and son set out for Mexico, where a protracted stay was to be made. Maria did not accompany them, for, during the time they had been at New York, she had married a French financier, Monsieur Malibran. The union proved an unhappy one, and a year later she was obliged to leave him, returning to Paris in September. Here she was joined by her brother, Manuel, to whom she was devoted. Under his tuition she continued her vocal studies, and in June Mme. Malibran, as she now was, made her *début* at the Italian Opera House with immense success. This was followed by a brief career, during which she took the world by storm. Like a meteor she dazzled all by a brilliancy beside which the other stars seemed dim. Like a meteor she passed away, as suddenly as she had arrived, for less than nine years after the *début* in Paris her career was cut short by her melancholy death at Manchester. But while she lived she carried all before her wherever she went. Whether she was singing on the Continent, in England, or America, it was ever the same.

Señor Garcia recounts a delightful episode in connexion with her first appearance at Milan. At this time Mme. Pasta was a great favourite in that city, her most effective part being Norma. Such enormous success did she make in this rôle, that the Milanese always used to allude to her as "Norma" instead of Pasta. Upon

her arrival Malibran was asked by the director of the Opera House in what part she would like to make her first appearance. She at once replied, "As Norma, Signor." "But, Madame, do you forget Pasta?" "Eh bien? I am not afraid of Pasta. I will live or die as Norma." Bellini's opera was, therefore, announced.

At the opening night Pasta came to hear the new-comer, and took up her position in the middle box of the grand tier, amidst loud applause from the populace. Malibran made her first entrance without any sound of encouragement, and the aria was received in deliberate, stony silence. Her next number was the terzetto. After one of the passages which she had to render, the audience suddenly forgot themselves and shouted out "Bravo!" This was instantly followed by cries of "Hush!" "Silence!" The trio came to an end. Not a hand! Instead were heard sounds of dispute from all parts of the house: "She is great." "She is nothing of the kind." "She is better than Pasta." "She is not," and these remarks went on for the rest of the evening. Upon the second night Pasta did not come to hear her new rival. This time, when Malibran came on and sang her aria, her rendering was greeted with immense applause, which continued throughout the evening in ever-increasing enthusiasm. At the close she was called before the curtain again and again, and, when she left the Opera House to drive home, the populace took out the horses and themselves dragged her to the hotel. From that moment Malibran was the pet of the Milanese public. Pasta's reign was over. Señor Garcia adds that the latter was a most

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finished vocalist, but cold, whereas the singing of his sister Maria was full of warmth and fire.

The maestro used to tell an interesting story in connexion with Malibran's début in Paris. At the time, his father was still away in Mexico. He himself, however, had come over to Europe, and was living with his sister in Paris. Rossini, who was director both of the Italian Opera and of the Grand Opera House, where French alone was performed, was a great friend, and frequently came to visit them. He heard her sing many times at social functions, and often, indeed, himself accompanied her at the piano. Yet, though perfectly aware what a splendid singer she was, the great composer never made her any offer to appear under either of the two managements.

At last her opportunity arrived, but from quite another source. A friend of theirs, Galli, a famous basso, was having a benefit at the Opera House. He called one day and told Mme. Malibran that he would put on "Semiramide" if she would like to sing the title rôle. After consulting with her brother, she decided to accept the offer. Her début was, therefore, duly made, and her success proved instantaneous. Such a scene over a débutante had not been known for years. Next morning, a note came asking Señor Garcia to go round to Rossini's rooms. Upon doing so he found him in a tremendous state of excitement, and prepared to give her a four years' exclusive engagement, at the rate of more than a hundred thousand francs per annum, if she would bind herself to sing exclusively at the Grand Opera House during that period. The terms were immense for those days. In spite of this, after

careful consideration, the young contralto decided to refuse them, feeling that it would be unwise to abandon Italian and confine herself to French for so long a time. She *did*, however, appear for him in a few operas, at enormous fees, with, if possible, greater success than before.

Now, it seemed very extraordinary to Señor Garcia and to his sister that Rossini should have heard her sing again and again in society without even mentioning such a thing as engaging her, and yet, after hearing her at the Opera House in music which she had sung before him on so many occasions, he should at once make her a magnificent offer for a term of years. Why was it? They could not understand it at all, and accordingly one day asked for the explanation.

"It is true," answered Rossini, "that I knew Maria was a brilliant singer, from listening to her at private houses. But I had never heard her in a big place before a large audience. Consequently, I felt that I could not make her a definite offer which would at all gauge her true worth. Either I should be offering her less than she was worth, and by this be doing *her* an injustice, or I should be offering her more than she was worth, and so be doing *myself* an injustice. But now that I have heard her sing in front of an audience, and have observed what effect they mutually had each on the other, I can offer the very largest sum which her singing is intrinsically worth. That is the explanation of what I have done."

In his music Rossini followed the old Italian style in which the orchestration appeared merely as an accompaniment to the singers, the voices being, throughout

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the opera, the principal consideration. Consequently, when he listened to Wagner's music, with its heavy instrumentation and tremendous effects for the orchestra, under the weight of which sometimes the voices disappeared altogether, it is hardly to be wondered at that he strongly disapproved of the innovation. One day an admirer of the new school of music asked him what was his opinion of Mendelssohn as compared with Wagner. The answer was brief and to the point. "One has written 'lieder ohne worte'; the other writes 'worte ohne lieder.'"

This reminds one of the remarks made by Mark Twain during an after-dinner speech at a certain Wagnerian Society in America. "Gentlemen, lately I have been taking a great interest in the works of Wagner! (Applause.) I have been to orchestral concerts to hear his music played! (Loud applause.) I have stayed at home to study his compositions in the full score. (Cheers.) The conclusion I have arrived at, gentlemen, is—that Wagner's music is *really* not *half* as bad as it sounds."

The freedom allowed to vocalists by the old composers, to which allusion has been already made, became after a time somewhat abused. Many of the singers were found lacking in the artistic taste and musicianly feeling, and in some cases even the knowledge necessary for making alterations, such as were illustrated by the story of the elder Garcia. In consequence of this, Rossini at last had to insist that those who appeared in his operas should perform every aria exactly as written, and he himself clothed the melodies with the execution, roulades and cadenzas, the choosing of which had previously been left to the performer.

Señor Garcia tells a good story about him in connexion with the death of Meyerbeer. A young student had written a funeral march to the memory of the great man, and came to show his music to Rossini, knowing that he had been an intimate friend of the late composer. The youth played the piece over and asked for his opinion.

"Well, there is one alteration I should have preferred," said Rossini. "What is that?" "I would rather have had *Meyerbeer* write a funeral march for *you*."

The maestro gives another illustration of Rossini's admiration for his fellow musician. Theirs was a genuine friendship, in which jealousy had no place, and they used to take a real pleasure in each other's successes. Upon one occasion they were seated together in a box listening to "Robert the Devil." At a certain part of the opera the Italian was so completely carried away with enthusiasm over his friend's music that he leapt to his feet and shook Meyerbeer's hand rapturously. "If you can write anything better than that, I'll—I'll dance on my head." "Then, my friend, you had better commence practising at once, for I have just completed the fourth act of 'The Huguenots.'"

Rossini was a man who never had much veneration for Royalty, and there are many tales which depict him as treating crowned heads in a charmingly casual way. When he came over to England he was honoured with a command to appear at St. James's Palace on the occasion of a special party which was being given by George IV. His Majesty was most gracious to the musician, and expressed the greatest delight over his compositions. At the end of the evening, as the guests were about to take

their leave, the King asked him to oblige them by giving one more piece, which should be the finish. "I think, Sire, we have had enough music for to-night," was the only answer vouchsafed.

Rossini often behaved in the most extraordinary way. He would soar high on the wings of his Muse, and the next moment fall to earth again, a second Icarus, only in his own case the ending of the story would be ridiculous. Whilst he was busy composing, it was his custom to remove his coat and sit in shirt sleeves. Nor was this all. To make himself still more comfortable, he would remove his braces and loosen the top of his trousers, after the fashion so much in vogue among schoolboys during the partaking of their Christmas dinner.

On one occasion the results were rather disastrous. When the Emperor Nicholas of Russia came over to Paris, he was most anxious to meet the distinguished musician, and decided to make a perfectly informal visit, so that he might enjoy a quiet chat with him. Accordingly he set out one morning unattended, arrived at the composer's rooms and knocked. "Qui est là?" "Nicholas." "Entrez!" The Czar entered, and Rossini quickly rose to welcome his imperial guest. Unhappily he forgot to adjust his garments before doing so. Consequently, as he jumped up, his trousers slipped down and left him covered with confusion—and a shirt!

Another of his little eccentricities was displayed over his capillary adornment. A good example of this is recounted by Mrs. Godfrey Pearse, the daughter of Mario and Grisi, from whom she inherits a voice of unusual sweetness which, though only as an amateur, she uses in a way which could hardly be surpassed for

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artistic feeling. When she was a girl her parents often took her with them to call on the composer. They would find him seated at his desk, writing music with the greatest alacrity. His head was bare—not from any feeling of respect, but rather because the covering once provided by nature had grown gradually less as hair by hair had deserted him, till at last there remained but two or three gathered together. At his side lay a number of wigs—curly, straight, long, short—and after welcoming the parents, he used to say to the small visitor: “Now, my dear, which would you like me to wear to-day?” Thereupon she chose whichever she fancied most, and with a smile he would at once put it on for her benefit.

Mario and Grisi were always special favourites with Rossini, for they were among the greatest exponents of the florid style of music which he loved. The two operatic singers were strangely different in the way they prepared for their public appearances.

Grisi was an indefatigable worker and would practise regularly every day without fail, whether it was during the opera season or vacation. Mario, on the other hand, would never by any chance do so on days when he was not actually going to perform in public. When he *was* due to sing in the evening, he would begin practising his favourite exercise from the duet between Almaviva and Figaro in “The Barber of Seville”: “All’ idea di quel metallo.”



Ec - co pro - pi - zia, che in sen mi scen - de

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If his voice were satisfactory in this passage, he would not trouble to do any further work.

Mario, who was one of the finest tenors of his time, was an Italian count, who had given up the dignity of his position for the sake of the career which he loved. His education and refinement came out in the artistic feeling with which he endowed all his musical renderings. Both husband and wife were—shall one say somewhat uneconomical? Though in their time they had made an enormous fortune, they managed to get rid of so much that Mario in later years had to be content with a very different mode of life from that to which he had been accustomed. Here is an instance of how he made the money fly. He would go out for a walk and see in a shop window some beautiful little statuette or picture which happened to catch his fancy. When this was the case, nothing could keep him from at once going in and examining the *article de vertu* closer. "What is the price?" "A hundred pounds." "A good deal to charge, is it not? No matter; send it up, please."

Manuel Garcia, who was a great friend of both, recalls a similar reminiscence. When in London once, Mario and his wife decided upon giving a wonderful luncheon to a large party of their friends. The total cost may be imagined from the fact that they paid £80 for some dessert and other light delicacies for the table specially sent over from Paris. After all had assembled, Grisi suddenly exclaimed, "It is far too hot to eat anything here. Let us drive out to Richmond for lunch. It will be far pleasanter." No sooner said than done. Carriages sufficient to accommodate the entire party were at once ordered. A telegram was sent on in

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advance, so that on their arrival at Richmond another magnificent lunch was awaiting them. Mario, without a thought, left behind at his own house the two-hundred-guinea luncheon to waste its sweetness on the servants' hall.

The chapter will be concluded by a few words concerning the career of Manuel Garcia up to the time when, at the age of twenty-five, he retired from public singing to devote his attention to teaching. As an operatic vocalist he was ever a phenomenally quick "study" in the memorizing of any fresh rôle.

It was customary in those days to allow the artists nine days to learn a two-act opera. For three acts the time would be increased to twelve days, and for four acts sixteen days. He recalls how, when Meyerbeer's "Prophète" was first brought out, all the singers grumbled at its great length. Yet for this they were given only eighteen days, and the same number for "William Tell."

Short though these periods used to be, compared with the amount of work to be accomplished, they were a great deal too long for Señor Garcia, who was able to learn the whole of his part in three or four days. At the end of ten days he would have picked up the parts of all the other singers as well, so that, if necessary, he was perfectly able to prompt them during the final rehearsals. His father used to take advantage of his extraordinary memory, and, when feeling indisposed, would say, "Manuel, you go on and take my part to-night." The younger Garcia would then go through the performance successfully, singing the tenor music of the opera, and altering the high passages to suit

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his voice. It will be remembered that at the close of the season in New York, in 1826, he went with the rest of the company to Mexico. Of the opening there he recalls an episode, which shows the wonderful powers of his father as a musician. They duly arrived at the Opera House, and at once began to prepare for their forthcoming Mexican season. Everything was unpacked, and they commenced going through scenery, dresses, and last, but not least, the music, to see that everything was in order. To their horror they discovered that all the orchestral parts and the score itself of "Don Giovanni" had been left behind. What was to be done? The opera was one of the most important in their répertoire, and was advertised to be given in a few days. There was no possibility of getting the missing music sent on in time: the artists were in despair, and lost their heads from anxiety. The elder Garcia alone remained calm in the midst of the turmoil. They could not give up the opera, and they could not perform it without the music! Very well, then, he must write out another copy of the score as best he could. Without losing a moment, he set to work, and actually reproduced the whole of the full orchestral score from memory. As each number was finished, it was given out to copyists, who prepared the separate parts for the various instruments. How successfully he carried out his self-imposed task may be judged from the fact that, when "Don Giovanni" was performed, no one present could tell that it was not the original score.

The Mexican season turned out a great success, and by the time it came to a close the elder Garcia had amassed a fair sum of money. Unhappily, on his way

to Vera Cruz, where he was to embark for Europe, he was attacked by brigands at Rio Frio, and the whole of his savings were seized. When he arrived once more in Paris he made a few appearances at the Italian Opera in "Don Giovanni" and "Il Barbiere," but his voice was no longer what it had been, and he retired. From that time he devoted the few remaining years of his life to teaching, and the end came in the summer of 1832. Among his principal pupils were Mmes. Rimbault, Mérie-Lalande, Favelli, and Ruiz Garcia, Géraldy, the great tenor Adolphe Nourrit (for whom Rossini wrote the part of Arnold in "William Tell," Meyerbeer those of Robert in "Robert le Diable" and of Raoul in "Les Huguenots"), and, of course, his own children.

While in Mexico his son began to feel the constant strain which the perpetual memorizing, rehearsing, and singing involved. After a few months the effect made itself felt, and he became almost afraid that his voice might leave him at any minute when on the stage. The father and mother laughed at this as absurd, and told him that he must make his *début* in Italy, as they had set their hearts on it. To please them, therefore, he set out for Europe alone, some months before the Mexican season came to an end. He went to Naples and duly appeared. Next day he wrote to his parents that he had done what they desired, and that he had made up his mind for the future to give his whole time to teaching singing, as he felt that neither his health nor inclinations made the continuation of an operatic career seem desirable for him. Having done this he left Naples, joined his sister Malibran in Paris, as has been already related,

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and soon afterwards was appointed by Auber to a Professorship at the Conservatoire. Thus it came about that seventy-five years ago Manuel Garcia took that step the importance of which to the Musical World it would be difficult to over-estimate.

CHAPTER IX

MANUEL GARCIA AND HIS PUPILS

OF all Manuel Garcia's pupils, none achieved greater fame than Jenny Lind. Born of humble parentage at Stockholm, she was admitted at the age of nine to the school of singing attached to the Court theatre. At eighteen she came out as an opera singer, appearing as Agatha in "Der Freischütz," Alice in "Robert le Diable," and other parts. During the two following years she damaged her voice to such an extent by over-exertion, that she determined to go straight over to Paris and seek assistance from Señor Garcia. She was accordingly brought to him one day by the Countess Bernadotte, a connexion of the Swedish royal family, and after explaining the reason of her visit, told him that she was anxious to commence lessons without delay. The maestro heard her sing a short aria, and the dialogue which followed was "en effet" as follows: "Mademoiselle, vous n'avez plus de voix" ("You have no longer a voice"). "But you will teach me?" "That we will see later. Your voice needs a long and complete rest before we can begin work." "But, mon Dieu! how can I wait? Will you not take me at once?" "I regret that I cannot." "I implore you!" "It is impossible. Come back in a month, and then we will see."

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After the period had elapsed she returned and sang again. Still he shook his head. "You need further rest. The voice is already better, but it is too soon to commence our studies. Be patient for another month, and then come once more." Wild with anxiety to start work, she waited for four endless weeks, and, when the stipulated time was over, came immediately to the maestro. *This* time all was well, and her training began without further delay. Under his instruction her singing steadily improved, and the following extracts from letters written by her in 1841, while studying with him, are particularly interesting:—

"I have already had five lessons from Malibran's brother. I have to begin again from the beginning; to sing scales up and down, slowly and with great care; then to practise the shake—very, very slowly; and to try and get rid of the hoarseness, if possible." . . . "His method is the best of our time, and the one which all here are striving to follow." . . . "I am well satisfied with my singing-master. With regard to weak points, especially, he is excellent. I think it very fortunate for me that there exists a Garcia, and I believe him also to be a very good man. I am very much pleased—nay, enchanted with his instruction."

The great teacher's opinion of his pupil is no less interesting. During the lessons which I had with him he would often speak of the famous Swedish soprano. Among other things, he said that he never heard her sing even a hair's breadth out of tune, so perfect was her musical ear: moreover, when she made a mistake, he only had to point it out, explain the cause, and show how it could be rectified. The fault would never be repeated. Jenny Lind possessed to an infinite degree

the power of taking pains. Added to this, she had a glorious voice, properly developed under her master's tender care. The combination of these gifts, mental and physical, enabled her to overcome every obstacle which crossed her path, and to reach the lofty position which she retained up to the time of her retirement from public life.

When her training had been completed, Meyerbeer heard her, and was most anxious to take her to London at once. Señor Garcia, however, feared that the fame of Grisi would hinder the younger artist from receiving a real chance. He therefore prevented her from appearing there until five years later. When she *did* make her début in England, it was with extraordinary success, while her return visit during the next season was nothing short of a triumph. The following story illustrates her astounding popularity, and shows how completely people lost their heads over the singing of the Swedish Nightingale.

In one town she was serenaded at her hotel by a number of admirers. Being touched at such a pretty compliment, Jenny Lind walked out on to the balcony to show her appreciation. Unfortunately for her, a valuable shawl slipped from her shoulders and fell down into the street below. It was seized by a dozen eager hands, anxious to obtain souvenirs of the occasion. In a moment it was torn to as many pieces, each of which in its turn formed the centre of a fresh group of memento-hunters. The compliment was, doubtless, extremely flattering, but it had its drawbacks.

In 1850 she left the operatic stage and confined herself to concert work. A tour through America brought

her £35,000 as her share, and this she spent in founding and endowing musical scholarships and charities in her native land. Nor was this all that she did in the cause of charity. She built part of a hospital in London, and an entire one at Liverpool, while at the Royal Academy of Music she founded the Mendelssohn Scholarship.

After a career of twenty-five years, Mme. Otto Goldschmidt, as she was in private life, decided to retire, and in 1870 made her final appearance at Düsseldorf. Some years after this, and shortly before her death, she sang at a charity concert, at which a certain Madame M—— had offered her services as pianist. This lady was asked to accompany the great *prima donna*, was shown the music, saw that it was simple, and replied she would be only too delighted. But simple though the music was, Mme. Goldschmidt came up to her and explained exactly how certain easy little passages were to be played, so as to make the whole effect as artistic as possible. The points to which she drew attention were, Madame M—— afterwards said, little things which by the ordinary ear would pass unnoticed: but to the true artist they made the whole difference.

During Manuel Garcia's career in Paris many other pupils passed through his hands, who afterwards became eminent either as vocalists or as teachers handing down in their turn the famous Garcia "school" of singing. Among these, perhaps the best-known were Bussine, of the Opera Comique, who taught Duc, the tenor of the Grand Opera, Paris; Henriette Nissen, afterwards Mme. Salomon; Jules Barbot, chosen by Gounod to create Faust, and Professor at the Conservatoire; Charles Bataille, chosen by Meyerbeer to create the bass

rôle in "L'Etoile du Nord," and specially famous for his singing in the "Seraglio" of Mozart. Of those who made their name as teachers three were pre-eminent—his sister Pauline Viardot-Garcia, Mme. Mathilde Marchesi, and Herr Julius Stockhausen.

To Mme. Viardot reference will be made later, in the pages dealing with Antoinette Sterling's lessons. The name of Mme. Marchesi is so well known that one need only refer to some of those who received at her hands a training the result of which is a very remarkable tribute to the success of the Garcia Method. In addition to her daughter Blanche, there have been such famous artists as Ilma de Murska, Tremelli, Mme. d'Angri, Frau Gerster, Emma Nevada, Sybil Sanderson, Francis Saville, Ada Crossley, Evangeline Florence, Suzanne Adams, Emma Eames, Calvé, and Melba. Herr Stockhausen, who was equally famous as a Lieder singer, became the greatest teacher in Germany, one of his best-known pupils being George Henschel, whose daughter, Helen Onslow Ford, is herself a charming vocalist. Stockhausen relates an anecdote which is delightfully characteristic of his illustrious master.

Early in 1848, the year of the French Revolution, he went to Paris in order to take lessons from Garcia, and, calling upon him, timidly asked his terms. "How much do you wish to give me?" inquired the other. "You see that I have no more pupils. They have fled owing to the Revolution." "But, maestro, you have just been trying a tenor, who has a powerful voice." "Ah, yes, but he has no ear. When I asked what his occupation was, he said, 'I am a turner.' 'Eh bien,' I answered, 'turn and return. No ear, no singer.'"

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During the summer of this year the maestro decided, like many others, to leave France, and seek a more peaceful life in England. At the end of June he came to London, and in the following November was appointed to the Professorial Staff of the Royal Academy of Music, where he continued to teach for no less than forty-seven years. It was six years after he had settled over here that he made his famous discovery of the laryngoscope.

From his earliest years Señor Garcia had been keenly interested in all scientific study, particularly in that which had to do with the human body. When in the year 1828 Maria made her début in Paris, it will be remembered that he was residing there with her, having returned from Naples, where he had appeared in opera to please his parents. Eighteen months later he obtained, through his sister's influence with the Commander-in-Chief, an appointment in the Commissariat of the French army, at that time engaged on an expedition for the conquest of Algeria. Thither he went, embarking at Toulon in the May of 1830. After the taking of Algiers he returned to Paris, and was attached to the military hospitals there. He now began to take up medicine, his special studies embracing the physiology of everything which had to do with the voice and the anatomy of the vocal cords. When he joined his father's professorial work in that city he made use of this knowledge with the greatest possible advantage. Soon he became widely known as a scientific teacher, and in the year 1840 presented to the Institut de France his "*Mémoire sur la Voix Humaine*." This treatise laid the foundation of all subsequent investigations in the

production of the voice. He continued to labour incessantly in perfecting his method, and in 1847 issued his "Traité complet de l'art du Chant," which invaluable work, dedicated to King Oscar I of Sweden, was afterwards translated into many languages, attaining a world-wide reputation.

During all these years of scientific study and investigation of the art of singing one wish was ever uppermost in his mind—"If only I could *see* the glottis."

One day, in the autumn of 1854, when on a visit to Paris, he was strolling in the Palais Royale. Suddenly there came to him an idea. "Why should I not *try* to see it?" How must this be done? Why, obviously by some means of reflection. Then, like a flash, he seemed to see the two mirrors of the laryngoscope in their respective positions, as though actually before his eyes. He went straight to Charrière, the surgical instrument maker, asked whether they happened to possess a small mirror with a long handle, and was at once supplied with a dentist's mirror. Returning home he placed against the uvula this little piece of glass, which he had heated with warm water and carefully dried. Then with a hand-mirror he flashed on to its surface a ray of sunlight. By good fortune he hit upon the right angle at the very first attempt. There before his eyes appeared the glottis wide open, and so fully exposed that he could see a portion of the trachea. So dumfounded was he, that he sat down aghast for several minutes. On recovering from his amazement he gazed intently for some time at the changes which were presented to his vision while the various tones were being produced. From what he witnessed it was easy to con-

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clude that the theory attributing to the glottis alone the power of engendering sound was confirmed, and thence it followed that the different positions taken by the larynx in the front of the throat had no action whatever in the formation of the sound. At last he tore himself away, and wrote a description of what he had seen. A few months later, in a paper which would have done credit to expert anatomists and physiologists, he read before the Royal Society the scientific thesis of his discovery. To the importance of the invention, and to the great services which it rendered to science and humanity, Professor Huxley bore remarkable testimony in a speech which he made during the presentation of a service of plate to the maestro in 1877. It was, he said, unnecessary to do more than remind physicians that in the laryngoscope they had gained a new ally against disease, and a most valuable addition to that series of instruments, all of which, from the stethoscope onwards, had come into use within the memory of living men, and had effected a revolution in the practice of medicine.

In connexion with this invention an amusing episode once took place.

His pupil, Bataille, was enthusiastic over it, and having been a medical student at one time considered himself well qualified to demonstrate its virtues. Hearing that the Turkish Ambassador in Paris was going to give a dinner to the most prominent French inventors of that time, he obtained permission to demonstrate the uses of the new exhibit. After pointing out that it would revolutionize the scientific study of the throat, he proceeded to force the instrument down

the gullet of an unfortunate Court official, who had barely finished dinner. The result was disastrous.

We have already seen what a number of famous singers were trained by Señor Garcia while he was at the Paris Conservatoire. He was no less successful when he came over here to teach, for among the best-known vocalists to whom he gave lessons in England were Antoinette Sterling, Catherine Hayes, Margaret Macintyre, Marie Tempest, Agnes Larcom, Miss Orridge, and Charles Santley.

The feelings with which the world-renowned baritone regards his old master may best be summed up in the words inscribed on the photograph which stands on the grand piano in Señor Garcia's home: "To the King of Masters." Moreover, I remember his remarking one day, while I was studying under the maestro, "You are learning from the greatest teacher the world has ever known": nor is he less ardent in his admiration for Mme. Viardot Garcia. "No woman in my day has ever approached her as a dramatic singer," he once said; "she was perfect, as far as it is possible to attain perfection, both as vocalist and actress."

Mr. Santley is himself remarkable as a man no less than as an artist. After having made a name which will ever be honoured and revered throughout the musical world for high ideals nobly sustained, he is, at the age of seventy-two, still able to make occasional appearances before the public, in which he shows how the old Italian method, coupled with a fine intellect and dramatic instinct, can triumph over mere weight of years. As one listens it seems impossible to believe that a man, who sings to-day with all the fire, vigour, and passion of

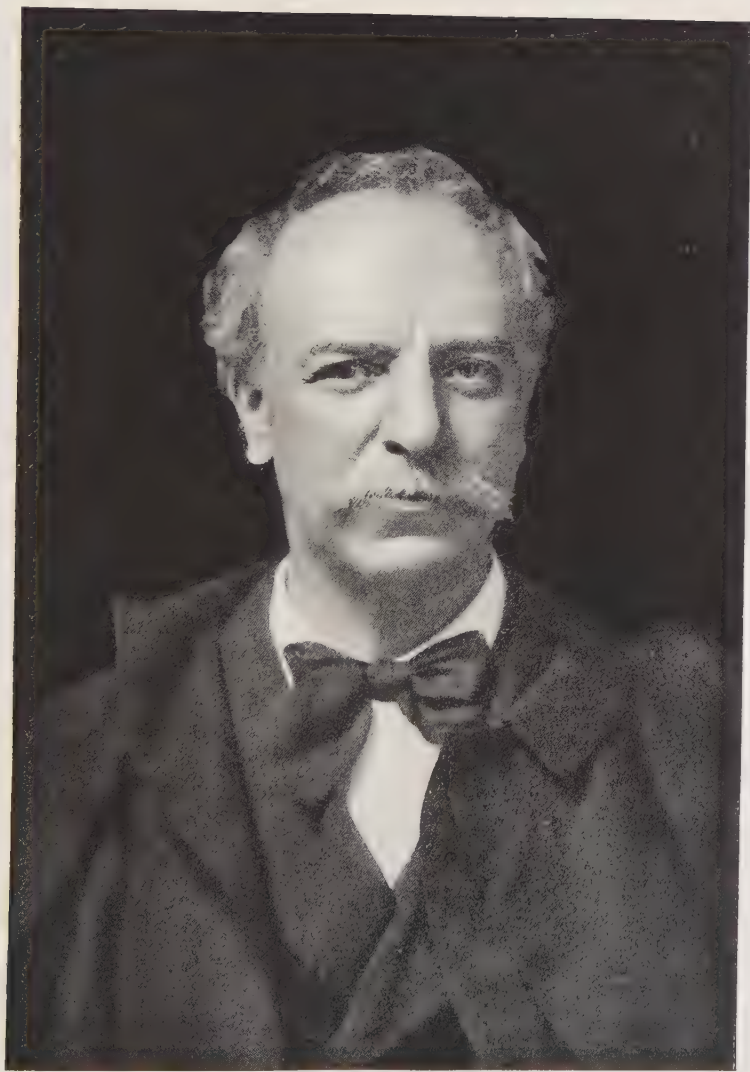


Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

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youth, can have been before the public for anything like so long a period as half a century. Charles Santley remains, as he must ever remain, the greatest baritone this country has produced.

Antoinette Sterling ever regarded Señor Garcia with the greatest affection and esteem, and used to delight in recalling memories of the days when she had studied with him.

After she had resigned her position at Dr. Adams' Church in New York, and come over to Europe, she went straight to the maestro for lessons. He was so carried away with the voice of his new pupil that he could not bring himself to keep her to exercises, as was his custom in the case of others. Almost at once he began taking her through all the Italian operatic rôles. One day she was struggling to execute a particularly difficult phrase, and at last burst out crying. "You ought not to give me these songs until I have mastered the exercises properly." "You're quite right," he answered, and took her back to the exercises once more.

Until the American vocalist commenced her training under him she used the full extent of her voice, singing from the D below middle C to the top soprano C sharp, a range of three octaves. She sang all the contralto arie from opera and oratorio, and at the same time felt equally at home with the soprano rôles.

The first thing that her new master did on hearing her was to make the remark, "If you continue as you have been doing, do you know what will happen? Look at this piece of elastic. I take it firmly at the two ends, and stretch it. What is the result? It becomes thin in the middle. If I were to continue constantly to do

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this, it would get weaker and weaker, until finally it would break. It is thus with the human voice. Cultivate an extended range, and keep on singing big notes at both extremes, and the same thing will occur which we have seen with the elastic. Your voice will gradually weaken in the middle. If you persist in continuing long enough, it will break, and the organ be rendered useless." For this reason he strongly advised her to abandon the higher notes, confining herself to genuine contralto music. Moreover, with the reduced range, he told her strictly to avoid practising on the extremes, to use them as little as possible, and build up her voice by exercising the middle portion of it. It is an invaluable hint for all singers. His pupil realized the wisdom of what he said, and from that time onwards ceased to use the top half octave of her voice.

The advice given, and the novel illustration which had been used to impress his words vividly on the memory, proved of the greatest use when later on Antoinette Sterling went to study with Madame Sainton Dolby. Her mistress was most anxious to make her practise continually on the extremes of the voice. If she had followed these instructions, she would have gradually worn out the middle notes, and so have made that hole in the voice which, when once it has appeared, is so difficult to bridge over again, even with months of rest. As it was, she simply replied that she had been told on no account to do such a thing, and since Mme. Dolby persisted in trying to persuade her against following the injunctions, she quickly brought the lessons to an end.

From Señor Garcia Miss Sterling went to the Con-

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continent, in order that she might spend a few months in a musical atmosphere different from that of England. While there, thanks to his kindness and recommendation, she continued her studies under his two pupils, Mme. Marchesi at the Cologne Conservatoire, and Mme. Viardot at Baden-Baden.

After a return to America, during which she was engaged to sing at Dr. Ward Beecher's church, she came over to England again to make her *début*. Señor Garcia heard of the forthcoming appearance of his old pupil, and tried to find out her address. She in her turn had lost that of her maestro. In consequence of this they did not have an opportunity of meeting again till the eventful evening had passed, and all London was ringing with the new contralto's praises. He had, of course, been present at Covent Garden, and at the end of her first song went round to the door of the artists' room to congratulate her. The attendant met him with the stereotyped reply, "We cannot let any one in." "But I insist—I *must* see her. She is my pupil." The request, however, was met with stolid indifference, and he was obliged to return to his seat.

When finally they did meet again, she at once recommenced her lessons, and these were continued, as regularly as engagements would permit, until 1880, seven years after her *début*.

During this period he used often to write elaborate cadenzas for her to introduce into the various arie. On one occasion he gave her a particularly intricate one to sing at an oratorio engagement, a performance of the "Stabat Mater." She did not herself care for the passage, but sang it, as he desired. When she came for

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her next lesson, she found him quite annoyed. "Why did you not last night sing the cadenza which I gave to you?" The contralto replied that she *had* done so. "Non, non! that was *not* mine which you sang! It was some other." "Why, how can you know, maestro? You never said anything about coming to hear me!" "No matter, I was there, and I say it was not mine." However, his pupil showed him her copy of the aria, with the cadenza marked down, exactly as it had been given to her, and, seeing this, her master at once said that he would write another, as he did not like that one.

When Antoinette Sterling arrived at Cologne and went for her first lesson, Mme. Marchesi, after trying her voice, and seeing that she could take soprano notes with the greatest ease, gave her some very high arie to study. What was her astonishment to be met with the calm reply, "Oh, no, Madame, I cannot possibly manage those. Mr. Garcia told me, when I was with him, that I must on no account sing so high, or I should ruin my voice. I want nothing but contralto music, please." Mme. Marchesi at once told her that it was perfectly right to do what her old master had advised, and did not give her any more high songs. But she never forgot the strangeness of this first interview. Years afterwards my mother happened to meet a sister of Mme. Marchesi, who remarked, after a chat about old times, "Do you know how Mathilde described you to me, when you were having your lessons? She said that you were a dear girl, but a perfect little devil to teach."

The Principal of the Conservatoire at this time was Ferdinand Hiller. He was a most wonderful musician,

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and was absolutely worshipped by the people around Cologne. On one occasion Miss Sterling went down to a Rhenish Festival with the great pianist and his daughter, and it opened her eyes as to his popularity. When they had reached their destination and left the train, they found the station crowded with admirers who had come to welcome him. Nor was this all, for when they entered a carriage to drive to the hotel, the people unhitched the horses from the vehicle in their excitement, and themselves drew it through the streets to the concert. A great actress had been engaged to take part in it, and Herr Hiller improvised to her recitation. This met with immense applause, but afterwards he improvised alone for a long time, and this made every one perfectly frantic with delight.

While the American was busy studying at the Conservatoire, the Queen of Prussia and the Crown Prince came to one of the concerts. Among the first names on the programme was that of "Miss Sterling." She was down for an aria from the "Elena" of Rossini, and her singing of this made such a furore that the whole concert was broken up, much to the disgust of the other students, who were hoping to have the honour of performing before the royal visitors. At the end of the Italian song the Prince cried out, "Magnifique! magnifique!" so carried away was he with her voice. He at once asked to have the singer introduced, and thus she had the honour of a long conversation with the Queen, who afterwards expressed the greatest surprise upon being informed that the vocalist was not a German.

All the time that the contralto was with Mme. Marchesi, she was so carried away with her music that

she never even noticed the celebrated scents of Cologne, and although she met a great number of famous people, she was so taken up with her work that she paid little attention to anything else. During her stay she found herself much stared at for wearing glasses, since they were at that time quite a novelty in Germany. On several occasions, when sitting among the Conservatoire Chorus, she was reprimanded for looking at the audience through her "Nasen Klemmer," but this troubled her little, and she went placidly on her own way.

It was assumed by Mme. Marchesi—as, indeed, it had been by all her teachers—that Antoinette Sterling would seek her success in the field of opera. But her own desires never ran in that direction. "The Glory of Music," she once said, "belongs to the instrument. The Glory of Song is in the words. My wish is to interpret the poet, rather than to follow the composer. I chose to be the singer of folk-songs and ballads, rather than the creator of an operatic rôle. Let the great works be played by the musician, but let the song be a thing for the heart."

In the autumn of 1868, upon leaving Mme. Marchesi at Cologne, she went over to England, and on 17 December sang in the "Messiah" at Darlington with Mme. Rudersdorff, appearing the following day at Middlesborough. The next few months were spent in London with Miss Elizabeth Philps, a composer whose acquaintance she had made at Cologne.

Mr. and Mrs. Philps were an old-fashioned couple, a perfect Darby and Joan. After dinner they would habitually sit down to a game of cards, never missing a single night in the week. On Sundays, being good

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Church people, they did not play, indulging themselves instead in a little wine, though they never touched it during the week, except upon very special occasions. After the Sabbath midday meal a plate was brought in for each person at the table, with a napkin, on which were laid two glasses, stem to bowl, for port or sherry. Mr. Philps lived to be over eighty, but whether the Sunday portion of wine had anything to do with it is more than one can say. At any rate, he does not mention this ingredient in the Recipe for Longevity, which he wrote, when an octogenarian, and gave to my mother.

Rise early, breathe the pure fresh air,
Begin and end each day with prayer
To the Great God Who reigns above,
The source of life, and health and love ;
Avoid excess throughout your life,
Keep free from envy and from strife ;
With joyful and contented mind,
Be always just and pure and kind.
Follow this plain advice, and see
How old and happy you can be.

Miss Philps was a woman of great gifts, who numbered among her friends Charles Dickens, Spurgeon, Joachim, Arabella Goddard, and many others. Consequently the contralto had a most enjoyable visit, going to concerts, theatres, and parties, and meeting many of the most interesting men and women of the day. During this period she went to Alberto Randegger and afterwards to Mme. Sainton Dolby for a few lessons, at the same time working constantly to improve her elocution and her German, and studying an Oratorio répertoire under one of the leading coaches. In May

she brought her stay to an end with a visit to her friends the Nelsons, at Edinburgh, followed by a trip through the Lake district with the Groves (Sir George's name was afterwards associated with the Royal College of Music, of which he was the first director). After this she set out for Baden-Baden to place herself under Mme. Viardot.

The day after her arrival she went to hear Alboni sing, "the greatest artist, and the sweetest, simplest woman," as she described her in the diary kept at this time. Three days later she presented herself at the house of Mme. Viardot, and having sung an aria said that she had studied enough Italian music for the present, and would like to take some German *Lieder*. Her new teacher smiled at her audacity, and merely replied, "Will you bring your Italian to-morrow, please?" For over three months she continued to ask whether she might bring her German at the next lesson, but was ever met with the same twinkling eye and the same unwelcome words, "Bring your *Italian* music, please." It was not, in fact, until eight weeks before the close of her stay that one day came the glad tidings, "*Now* you may bring your German music if you wish."

Mme. Viardot had at this time retired from her great operatic career. Her first appearance had been made at the Haymarket Opera House in "Othello." From the very commencement it was seen that a remarkable artist had come before the public. It was indeed the triumph of mind over matter, for, as Señor Garcia said, there was no extraordinary voice, as there had been in the case of her elder sister, the lamented Malibran. With her it was another case, which went to uphold the truth of

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the well-known dictum, that "genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains." Pauline Viardot possessed the will power and determination to rise above all obstacles, just as Demosthenes, centuries before, made up his mind to become a leading advocate, and, in order to attain greater clearness of enunciation, spent hour after hour by the seashore, where he would recite, his mouth filled with pebbles. But what a result! The Athenian ended by becoming one of the world's greatest orators, Señor Garcia's younger sister became one of the world's greatest dramatic singers. Her début in London was followed by a brilliant career on the operatic stage, during which, perhaps, the most notable incidents were her creation of the part of Fidès, in Meyerbeer's "Prophète," and of the title rôle in Gluck's "Orfeo," both of which had been specially written for her.

Many were the tributes paid by those who heard her. Georges Sand called her "the personification of poetry and music." Alfred de Musset, the poet of Romanticism, and warm friend of Victor Hugo, wrote of her—

Ainsi donc, quoi qu'on dise, elle ne tarit pas
La source immortelle et féconde
Que le coursier divin fit jaillir sous les pas.

Liszt counted her one of his best pupils, and, before appearing as a vocalist, she played the piano with the greatest success at a number of concerts given in Belgium and Germany by Malibran and the violinist Beriot.

Again, Richard Wagner, in a letter to a friend, described how, when he came to reside in Paris for the second time, Mme. Viardot had sung to him at *sight*, with the

most perfect expression, a whole act of Isolde's music, at a time when so many were discussing the vocal difficulties presented by his opera "Tristan."

At the end of a triumphant career, lasting over a period of twenty-five years, the grand artist retired and settled in Baden-Baden as a teacher. Here in her own grounds she had a private theatre made, a small square building, capable of holding about a hundred people, in addition to a diminutive orchestra, stage, and ante-room. In this hall she was wont to give very select concerts, to which were invited celebrities from every land, representatives of the various branches of art and science, poets, painters, diplomats, and the like. On one occasion Antoinette Sterling sang there before the old Emperor of Germany, and afterwards conversed with him.

At the end of the summer term Mme. Viardot had her pupils perform an operetta of her own composition, while Mme. Artot sang a scene from an opera, and several others from among the greatest German artists took part in the programme. These included Joseph Joachim and Ferdinand David, the latter of whom had studied under Spohr, and was at this time Concertmeister in Leipzig. Miss Sterling sang an Italian aria, in addition to taking part in the operetta. Her hair was let down for the occasion, while she wore a costume in the Grecian style, surmounted by a red velvet cap. This was the only time she ever appeared in "stage costume," or suffered rouge and powder to be applied to her face.

During these months she saw a good deal of Brahms, and the following is her description of these meetings:—

"Herr Brahms looked almost a boy, rather short and thick, with a full round face and fair yellowish hair.

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In honour of Mme. Viardot's birthday he wrote a small chorus for women's voices, and came himself to conduct the rehearsals, all of which took place in my rooms. At five o'clock on the birthday morning, we walked with Herr Brahms through the grassy fields up to her house, and there, under her window, sang the morning serenade. When she came down from her room, her face wreathed in smiles, every student threw her a bouquet. A stipulated price was given for each of these bunches of flowers, so that none should be more gorgeous than the rest.

"Herr Brahms would often come to see me, and sit down at the piano while I ran through some of his songs. He was very anxious for me to sing them, but I saw that they did not suit me at all, so had to refuse his request. One Lieder in particular was like a duet, being written very low in the first part, and very high in the second. What is more, I told him so."

When Brahms came over to England, a little incident occurred which made him appear in a somewhat unpoetical light. While he was staying at the Rudolf Lehmanns', there happened to be a tin of sardines upon the breakfast table one morning. It was one of his favourite dishes, and he forthwith attacked it with gusto. In a very few minutes the little pile of fish disappeared from view. Then, with a smile of satisfaction, he raised the sardine-tin to his lips, and—*horribile dictu!*—drank down the oil which was left. After that it is a little difficult to be romantic about the composer.

All good things must come to an end. Having spent some six months at Baden-Baden, Antoinette Sterling felt that she must go back to America, and prepare to

make her way as a singer. With a heavy heart she bade farewell to her kind friends in Baden-Baden, and then went up to say good-bye to the teacher with whom she had spent so many happy hours of study. But when the time came for the last shake of the hand, she was lifted into the seventh heaven of delight by the parting words which were spoken by Mme. Viardot.

"My dear, now that you have mastered the Art of Song, you can undertake without fear *Lieder*, or whatever else you wish, for your intelligence and powers of interpretation will enable you not only to comprehend, but also to express the fullest meaning of the poet's words. You have a beautiful voice, and a great career lies before you. So keep a brave heart, and prosper. Good-bye."

CHAPTER X

LESSONS WITH A NONAGENARIAN

IT was in the May of 1895, that my mother took me up to see her old master, in order that he might give his decision as to the advisability of my entering the musical profession. A few weeks before this Señor Garcia had celebrated his ninetieth birthday. As we were driving out to "Mon Abri," his home in Kilburn, I tried to imagine what manner of man this could be who was to hear me. I endeavoured to picture the scene which we would find at the house—the whispered injunction in the hall to tread gently, when we passed into the presence of the aged musician, who would doubtless be found stretched at full length upon an invalid chair, propped up with cushions and surrounded with rugs, coughing painfully, and in feeble voice pleading for some port wine, to sustain his fast-waning strength—

In second childishness and mere oblivion—

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans—everything.

The blinds would of course be drawn down, lest too strong a light should harm those weakened eyes. I even found myself wondering whether I should not have to sing down a speaking trumpet.

We drove up to the house and opened the green gate

which bore the name "Mon Abri." I had supposed that there would surely be straw laid in the street to deaden the noise of the traffic. First surprise, there was not a sign of any. We walked through the front garden. Second surprise, there was not even a suspicion of drawn blinds. Mounting the steps, I expected to find that the bell had been removed, and a notice put up: "Knock gently." Surprise number three, the bell was untouched. As for the door-knocker, it hung there naked and unashamed. It was not even swathed in cloth. Certainly this was all very strange. But it was as nothing to the shock that followed.

We rang gingerly for fear of disturbing the nerves of the inmate. A maid came to the door. "Is Señor Garcia well enough to see us? If he is sleeping, do not disturb him. We can wait till he is rested." The servant raised her eyebrows in slight wonderment. "Mr. Garcia is out gardening, Madame. I will tell him of your arrival."

I must confess, I nearly fainted with astonishment at these words. Yet they were uttered in the most ordinary tone, as though such things were mere episodes of everyday life. We were ushered into the drawing-room. Whilst we waited, I looked round with interest. It was large, bright, and airy, with French windows opening on to a pretty garden. Opposite the door stood a grand piano, piled up with music and supporting one or two photographs. The keyboard was open, and on the music-stand lay a copy of his famous publication, "Hints on Singing." The piano stool was close to an alcove, in front of the window. Along the right wall as one entered stood a long bookcase. Immediately to

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the left stood a second one, of Boule workmanship, on the shelves of which could be seen many volumes of music. At the other end of the room stood the fireplace, a sofa on either side. The walls were hung with prints. Certainly there was no sign of an invalid-chair or medicine bottles. Whatever met the eye seemed to hint at an active life. Really it all seemed very extraordinary.

The door opened and Manuel Garcia entered. With a genial smile and an exclamation of pleasure, he came rapidly across the room, taking short, quick steps, and was shaking hands with Antoinette Sterling almost before she had time to rise from her seat. The next quarter of an hour passed swiftly by. A stream of questions fell from the lips of the wonderful old gentleman as to what she had been doing, where she had been, what were her latest songs, what she thought of the pianist who had recently come out, what of the political situation, when she could come to lunch, and so on, and so on.

He was short of stature, a little bent with age, frail-looking perhaps, but yet almost wiry. His eyes were bright and piercing, his profile clear-cut and distinguished. He had an olive complexion, a gift from his native Spain which fifty years of London fog and de-oxygenized air had been unable to take from him.

His white hair was surmounted by a red skull-cap, and his moustache was closely cut. He spoke in rapid tones, yet with the absolute distinctness of clear enunciation.

Every word gave proof of that keen interest which he felt in all that was going on around him. In expression, voice, and gesture, there was an amazing alertness,

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vigour, and mental activity which few men of seventy could equal, fewer still surpass. His conversation gave evidence of the fire of youth, tempered with the tolerance of wise old age.

A more intimate acquaintance with the great teacher revealed further qualities which made him loved, nay worshipped, by all his pupils. Loyal, true, and staunch, he had an old-world courtesy, a charm of manner, and a patience which was nothing short of remarkable.

When Señor Garcia had heard me sing, he asked a few penetrating questions. Then he turned to my mother, and said that he would take me as a pupil. He thought, however, that it would be *better for me to wait a year before starting work*.

There was something almost uncanny in being told by a man ninety years of age to come back in twelve months, and commence taking singing lessons from him. But seeing and hearing him, one could not doubt that he would be ready and waiting at the appointed time.

Nor was the supposition wrong. In the first week of April of the following year, when he was approaching his ninety-second birthday, the first lesson took place. From that time on, my studies continued under his care and guidance until April, 1900, when he was in his ninety-sixth year. In this I had the honour of being the last pupil to be regularly trained by him for the musical profession, receiving the full four years' course of tuition.

That the eminent master should have been able to continue teaching at all at such an age is sufficiently astonishing. That during those years he should have postponed lessons through indisposition only upon some

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three or four occasions, gives a still keener insight into the extraordinary existence which he was able to lead as a Nonagenarian.

What a wonderful experience those lessons would be, lasting anything up to two hours ! When he was interested in explaining certain effects in singing, or in recounting stories of artists and operas à propos of the work in hand, time ceased to exist. The luncheon-bell would ring three or four times without having any apparent effect, so engrossed was he in his subject. At the end of the lesson he would, with the old courtliness of his youth, insist on seeing one out himself. If one opened the door and stood aside for him to pass, the manœuvre proved perfectly useless. With a delightful gesture he insisted on his guest preceding him. Then he would skilfully slip past one in the hall and open the front door. There sometimes he would stand—oblivious and apparently impervious to draughts and cold—chatting for several minutes, or giving some parting advice before holding out his hand to wish one “au revoir.”

Almost more surprising is it that he should have continued to carry on his own correspondence. Many a long letter was received from him during those years. Once he wrote out the music of an Italian aria, “Liete voci,” with elaborations of the original melody. A portion is reproduced overleaf.

During the lessons he would remain seated at the piano, undertaking all accompaniments himself. These would be given quietly, but with a firm, rhythmical precision. In the case of the old Italian arie, they would generally be played from memory. His pale expressive

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hands used to weave elaborate preludes and harmonies into the music, and as one sang he would sit with closed eyes as though his thoughts were far away. But they were not, they were very much present. If a mistake were made the music would cease, the error be

*Mon ami
Crickwood*

Cher M^r. Maubrey

*Demain vendredi 21. j'ai le
satisfaction de vous prier, de
venir prendre votre leçon à 10 heures.
Une heure bien à vous
M. Parisien*

pointed out, and a suggestion given for its correction. This would take the form either of some helpful little observation made in clear, precise terms, or of personal illustration. Though over ninety years old, he was quite equal to showing how he wanted notes taken, or an effect given, by singing the passage himself. On one memorable occasion he sang two entire octaves, commencing at

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the low A flat, and ending with a high baritone G sharp. It sounds an almost incredible *tour de force*, but is an absolute fact. The voice naturally trembled with age, though in a surprisingly slight degree. But the timbre, enunciation, and dramatic power were still there, while every phrase revealed the extraordinary fire of his Spanish temperament.

When he had been singing thus one day he laughed



and said, "I cannot sing any more. You see how the voice trembles. That you must not imitate. The tremolo is an abomination—it is execrable. Never allow it to appear even for a moment in your voice. It blurs the tone and gives a false effect. Many French singers cultivate it, and I will tell you why."

There had been at one time, he said, an eminent vocalist worshipped by the Parisian public. His voice was beautiful in quality, faultless in intonation, and absolutely steady in emission. At last, however, he began to

get old. With increasing years the voice commenced to shake. But he was a great artist. Realizing that the tremolo was a fault, but one which, alas ! could not be avoided, he brought his mind to bear upon the problem before him. As a result, he adopted a style of song in which he had to display throughout a very intense emotion. Since in life the voice trembles at such moments, he was able to hide his failing in this way by a quality of voice which appeared natural to the situation. The Parisians did not grasp the workings of his brain and the clever way in which he had hidden his fault. They only heard that *in every song which he sang* his voice trembled throughout. At once they concluded that if so fine an effect could be obtained by him with this trembling, it was evidently something to be imitated. Hence the singers deliberately began to cultivate a tremolo. The custom grew and grew until it became at last almost a canon in French singing.

The maestro told another story to illustrate the strange way in which effects were sometimes produced by the old vocalists. A certain artist was singing Secchi's "Lungi dal caro." Something in his voice gripped the audience from the first bar. There was an indefinable quality which they had never experienced before, something which thrilled and stirred them with an inexpressible weirdness, something which almost made the blood run cold. When the music ceased, every one drew a deep breath and remained silent for a few moments. Then came a burst of rapturous applause. Later on a fellow musician went up to the hero of the episode, congratulated him, and then said : "Tell me how you were able to produce that effect upon your audience."

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“Did you not hear? No? Then I will tell you how I did it. Throughout the music I sang the least shade flat. The result you observed!”

At the lessons the maestro did not, as a rule, offer either praise or blame to a very great extent. He was, however, always encouraging, and treated pupils according to their individual powers. He seemed to know instinctively what they could manage, what was beyond them. His remarks might be made in English, French, or Italian, so that the pupil had to keep his wits about him. In them all there was a directness and penetration which filled one with implicit confidence in his keen mind and extraordinary experience. Hardly a lesson passed in which he did not, during the intervals for rest, tell some anecdotes of the most enthralling interest. These would have as their subject the elder Garcia, Malibran, Jenny Lind, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Mario, Pasta, or some other of the great musicians of the past. Often, too, he would speak of his memories of Spain, of the Peninsular War, the French Revolution, the first New York season of Italian opera, his tour in Mexico, the discovery of the laryngoscope, or other memories of his long career. But though related with delightful readiness, they ever displayed the most extreme modesty in reference to the part played by himself in the various episodes.

It was in the same spirit, too, that he would speak of his efforts as a teacher. “I only tell you how to sing, what tone is good, what faults are to be avoided, what is artistic, what is inartistic. I try to awaken your intelligence so that you may be able to criticize your own singing as severely as I do. I want you to listen

to your voice, and use your brain. If you find a difficulty, do not shirk it. Make up your mind to master it. So many singers give up what they find hard. They think they are better off by leaving it, and turning their attention to other things which come more easily. Do not be like them.

"In Paris once a lot of boys were set some hard problems whilst competing for a prize at the Gymnase. One of them was seen to cry, and, on being asked why he did so, replied that the problems were too *easy*. He was afraid that all the others would be able to do them as well as himself, so that he would be prevented from carrying off the prize. The master smiled, and told him to answer the questions by a more difficult method, if he knew one. He did so, and gained the first place.

"Many singers do the opposite. They burst into tears because they find a thing too hard. Do not be afraid to face a difficulty. Make up your mind to conquer it. I only direct you. If you do a thing badly, it is your fault, not mine. If you do it well, it is to your praise, not to mine. I show pupils how to sing, and what is the proper way to study. Suppose some one meets me out of doors and says, 'Can you tell me the way to Hampstead Heath?' I answer, 'I will walk there with you.' We set out, and I keep by his side, saying, 'This is the street we have to pass through. Do not turn down there. That goes in the wrong direction. Follow my instructions, and you will arrive at your destination. I know the road well.' If he takes the wrong turning, that is his fault, not mine. I cannot prevent him from going off into the slums. I can only say, 'Do not go there, that is wrong.' He must follow

my advice or not, as he chooses. Again, if we come to a very steep hill, and he says, 'I can't climb that. It is too difficult. Let us not go up, I am tired,' I can only reply, 'If you wish to reach the Heath, you *must* climb it. There is no other way of getting to your destination.' But if he is lazy, and will not mount it by his own endeavour, I cannot lift him and carry him over upon my shoulders."

How characteristic it was of the master's innate modesty to speak of his work in this simple way. How he ignored the times when he pulled the pupils back by main force from that wrong path, when he cheered them on should they get discouraged, when he described in concise terms the easiest way of climbing that hill. If they failed to mount the ascent on the first occasion, he explained the reason for their failure. Then he bade them be of good courage, and try again. If they failed ten times, he would still more carefully repeat exactly what had to be done, and seek for fresh illustrations which might perhaps put the matter in a clearer light. Truly, if he did not actually carry them up the steep path, he came very near doing so. He was like a friend offering assistance rather than a teacher paid to instruct. Ah! dear maestro, never shall I forget the infinite patience and gentleness which you displayed in those hours of study!

When a difficulty had been overcome, he would smile and say, "That was as I wish. Do it again. Good! Now try and impress upon your mind exactly what you did. Sing it once again. *Ça va bien!* Do not let the old mistake occur again." If one *did* allow it to reappear, he would shake his head sorrowfully and say,

"Jenny Lind would have cut her throat sooner than have given me reason to say, 'We corrected that mistake last time.' It seemed strange at first, to say the least, to hear these comparisons made between oneself and a pupil who had studied under the same master fifty years previously. However, after studying for three years, one grew used to hearing him speak of musicians who had been dead forty years or more, of a sister who, after a brilliant career, had died in 1836, of a father who had come into the world a hundred and twenty years previously, and of his first singing master, Anzani, who was born early in the eighteenth century, and might well have shaken hands with Bach. At any rate, during the last year of study I was able to hear such casual remarks as, "Ah, yes, I remember teaching this song to Stockhausen for his début" (the great German vocalist being somewhere about seventy years of age), without evincing more than a momentary surprise. There seemed nothing in the least extraordinary in hearing that Richard Wagner had wished him to undertake the training of the singers for the *first Bayreuth Festival*.

Wagner's compositions never attracted Señor Garcia. The heavy orchestration of the German music did not appeal to him, though he raised no objection to going through Wolfram's song, "O Star of Eve," in the Italian version, "O tu bel astro incantator." Tannhäuser was written in a lyrical style: one shudders to think what he would have said to anything like Wotan's "Abschied."

He did not believe in "vocalises," such as are used by most teachers in earlier lessons. Instead of these, he preferred to give simple Italian arie. He pointed out

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that with them one began at once to learn the value of articulation and expression. Exercises he looked on as the foundation of all good singing. They would take the form of sustained and swelled notes, scales, passages of combined intervals, arpeggios, chromatics, and shakes. The acquirement of agility in execution, he used to say, required *at least* two years' study, the result being that the voice became flexible, even, mellow, and strong. He often expressed his abhorrence of that modern term, "Professor of Singing and Voice Production." "It is all one," he would say. "Voice production is part of the art of singing." In the elucidation of difficulties he used to make use of many similes and illustrations which threw a vivid and illuminating light upon the matter in hand. These, together with the various maxims of artistic singing which he would impart, I used to write down in a book after each lesson, and I have found them of the most inestimable value and assistance in my work as a teacher of singing.

Often at the close of the lesson there would come an invitation to stay on to tea. In the summer we would adjourn to the garden, where the table would be spread beneath the inviting shadow of the trees. Those would be red-letter days indeed.

On these occasions the veteran musician would leave thoughts of singing behind him, and show his wide interests, and deep insight into all the questions of the day. Once, when the conversation had turned upon violin playing, there came up the name of Kubelik, who had come out in London a few weeks previously. After four years' intercourse one was not surprised to learn that one's host had already been to hear the new instru-

mentalist. I must, however, confess to having been startled when, with the greatest sang-froid, he began comparing the execution with that of Paganini. At other times he spoke of Joseph Chamberlain and the newest developments of Fiscalitis, the building of skyscrapers in New York, the drama of the day, the German Emperor's latest speech, or the phases of the Spanish War. One afternoon he even showed himself ready to discuss the pros and cons of Christian Science. Only a few weeks before writing these words I was spending a Sunday afternoon with the Centenarian, as he had now become. It was impossible to believe that he was indeed in his hundred and first year. He displayed even more vivacity than at the time when I was commencing lessons with him, while even in those days Antoinette Sterling asserted that he seemed more hale and active than he had been when she, in her turn, was studying under him twenty-five years previously. Truly, as he gets older he seems to become younger.

Mr. Charles Klein, the American dramatist, brother of Mr. Hermann Klein, an old pupil of the maestro, called on the same afternoon. He was put through many searching questions with regard to the latest phases of American thought and character. When tea arrived, Señor Garcia displayed the most extraordinary energy, jumping up and insisting upon getting a small table upon which Mr. Klein might rest his cup and plate. The latter he watched with anxiety. When it was empty, he promptly fetched a dish of scones, and with the most wonderful humour and good spirits pressed the guest to take some more. As for his own wants, it was perfectly futile for one to offer to take charge of

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his cup. Nothing would satisfy him but that he should himself take it over to Mrs. Garcia. When I rose to go, the dear maestro insisted on coming to the front door, as in the old days. In shaking hands he remarked, "I am delighted that you came, and shall hope to see you here often again." And, indeed, if I should fail to have the delight and privilege of seeing the Centenarian many more times during the next decade, I have not the smallest doubt that it will be due to one cause alone—my own departure from this world. Manuel Garcia will, I am quite sure, be at "Mon Abri," still passing his mornings in walks to the Kilburn High Road, his afternoons in playing snatches of Italian opera, reading the paper, or indulging in conversation, and his evenings in playing bridge or chess, a game in which he used often to try conclusions with Sir Charles Hallé. And when his hundred and tenth birthday arrives, he will go through it with as little fatigue as he went through the celebration of his centenary.

What a marvellous occasion it was, that seventeenth of March, 1905! He rose between nine and ten o'clock, and set out for Buckingham Palace. There he was received by King Edward, who expressed to him his congratulations and his recognition of all that Señor Garcia had done for medicine and music. His Majesty conferred upon him the Honorary Commandership of the Royal Victorian Order, and at the same time signified a wish to be personally represented at the banquet which was to take place in the evening.

From the Palace he drove to the rooms of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society in Hanover Square. At twelve o'clock, amid volleys of applause, he entered

the room with short quick steps, walked unaided to the dais, mounted it with agility and took his seat upon the crimson throne, a magnificent basket of flowers on either side. Here for an hour he sat, upright and smiling. The proceedings were opened by Sir Felix Semon, who in a few words announced the Royal honour which had been conferred that morning upon the Centenarian. Next came the Marquis de Villalobar, who, on behalf of King Alfonso, presented him with the Royal Order of Spain, "as a high testimony to his merits, and to the services rendered to mankind by his science and labours." Then followed the presentation of the Gold Medal of Science sent by the German Emperor. After this came a long procession of bearers of addresses from his old pupils and from the musical institutions and laryngological societies of nearly every country in the world.

At last the programme was brought to a conclusion by the unveiling of the portrait by Sargent, which had been internationally subscribed by the friends and admirers of the Grand Old Man of Music. After reading a speech of thanks, Señor Garcia returned to his home, which was inundated with telegrams and baskets of flowers. Here he rested until evening, when he drove down to the banquet at the Hotel Cecil.

Alighting from the carriage, he entered the hotel, and walked nimbly down three flights of stairs to the cloak-room. He partook of the dinner, and listened with rapt attention to the congratulatory speeches made to him in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. After the health of the King had been drunk, Sir Felix

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Semon rose and proposed the toast of the evening in eloquent words. It was received with enthusiasm, and the company joined in singing "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow." Then, in an atmosphere of electrical excitement, the hero of the occasion stood up, and amid a thrilling silence made his response.

It was the first occasion in the world's history that a man of world-wide fame had ever attained his hundredth anniversary. It was, moreover, the first time that any centenarian, whether illustrious or "born to blush unseen," had been in such full possession of his faculties and bodily strength as to make his own reply to the hundreds assembled to do honour to his birthday. His words may, therefore, well be placed on record:—

"Sir Felix Semon, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—Words, one has said, are given us to conceal our thoughts. They will admirably fulfil that purpose if you take mine as a full and complete expression of my feelings on this extraordinary occasion. But words, whatever use we make of them, are not mere masks. They are living things, intensely living things to some, to those of us who hold the magic ring that makes them slaves. They are as mighty friends, friends such as you to me, who from the ocean depths of your indulgence fling back to me my own poor and trivial deeds, transfigured into something 'rich and strange.'"

At this point he handed the MS. of his speech to the Chairman, who read the remainder. It ran as follows:—

"There are so many of you to be greeted, old friends out of the past, old pupils, comrades, children! Ah, children! Sixteen societies of laryngologists, and mostly come of age, calling me 'father'! They will have it

so, and I am pretty proud of the title, I can tell you. Well, do you think one solitary man could find fit words to answer all these voices? But you can do it for me. There is an old story some of you may remember, which when I read it changed the aspect of things for me by its very name, for that was a stroke of genius: 'Put yourself in his place.' What a different world it would be if we all did that. Well, you try now. Try hard. Think yourselves each one hundred years old to-day. Not the ladies. I will not ask them. Though they may come to that they will never look it, and they will never know it, and no one will ever believe it. But you men can try. Fancy you each lived one hundred years and woke to-day to find yourself surrounded by kindly clamorous voices, 'troops of friends.' What would you say? I think you would say nought. Only the infinite nought which circles all things could give an adequate answer to you all. I shall say nought to this great master of the brush, Mr. Sargent, who with his creative touches in a moment brought life from void. It is a strange experience to see one's very self spring out at one from nothing in a flash. I shall say nought to this rash friend of mine, Sir Felix Semon, who into the midst of a busy life crammed all the work and worry of the labour of love that has brought you here to-day; nought to the friends so very near my heart, the Laryngological Society of London, and the chosen band whose terrible labours fill me with remorse whenever I think of them, the members of the Garcia Committee. I shall say nought, nought, nought to all of you, except just this, 'God bless you every one.'"

"And so to bed," like Samuel Pepys?

Not at all. It is generally reported that his centenary did not end here, but was brought to a close by the enjoying of lager beer and cigarettes at Sir Felix Semon's

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house. However that may be, I had the joy of a short chat with him in the entrance hall of the hotel after the banquet, while he was waiting for the carriage to be summoned. Certainly, judging by the speed with which he walked to the door when he heard that the vehicle was waiting, I am quite sure that if he did *not* have cigarettes and lager beer at Wimpole Street on his way home, it can have been only due to one reason,—none may have been offered !

CHAPTER XI

THE ST. JAMES'S HALL BALLAD CONCERTS

THEY were flourishing times for music and musicians, the years between 1880 and 1890. I am taking this decade because it was the one during which Antoinette Sterling was at her zenith. Every one connected with music seemed to be making money more or less easily. Publishers, concert-givers, choral societies, agents, artists, composers, lyric-writers, and those thousands who were less prominently connected with the profession—printers, engravers, travellers, and the like—all were enjoying unexampled prosperity. Yes, the world was indeed a pleasant resting-place for musicians in the eighties.

Those were the days of the Better Land, the Star of Bethlehem, the Holy City, and The Lost Chord, of the Three Fishers, and an equal number of Beggars, of Darby and Joan, of Anthea and Nancy Lee, of the Owl and the Midshipmite, of Life's Promise, and of that Love-Song which was both Old and Sweet. That was the time when the Yeoman was Wedded at such frequent intervals that he must have outstripped Brigham Young, and made a good second to Solomon. It was then, too, that They all

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bestowed their affections upon Jack, because of a fancied resemblance between his heart and the sea: there was something fishy about both. No one had as yet been urged to cease from lamentation and Dry those Tears. No one Knew a Lovely Garden; neither was it for a moment suggested that Violets should be delivered daily with the milk and the morning paper.

They were the days when the ships of the publishers sailed forth with cargoes of sheet music and returned to harbour laden with much weight of gold. No rivals had as yet hoisted the Jolly Roger. Nowadays they have to sail out laden with gold, and return with cargoes of sheet music, the latter only captured at great expense from those pirates who are the latter-day followers of the original "PIRATE BOLD," of whom budding Basses loved to sing. They were very wonderful, those piratic ditties. The lyric-writer never made allusion to his hero at the end of a line without shortly afterwards, at the close of another line, revealing one of the following interesting facts: Either he reassured the listener by pointing out that the incidents to which he was referring took place "in the days of OLD," or else he threw out a distinct hint that the gentleman in question was seeking for specimens of that particular precious metal which is of a yellow colour. Sometimes, when he was especially sparkling, he discovered with almost devilish ingenuity that there was yet another possible rhyme. In that case, his next reference to the imitator of Captain Kidd was followed, at the usual interval, by the remark that some one felt his or her "blood run COLD."

Sometimes indulging in day-dreams I wander through vales of Asphodel, spend a Saturday to Monday at

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some "Castle in Spain," and thence pass on to Utopia. In that happy land, "ever so far away," I seem to hear songs of a "Pirate Bold," who has become, wonderful to relate, a "Bold Pirate"—a very different thing. No longer do the lyrics tell of chilled blood, of searching after wealth, or of the days gone by. Instead, the ears drink in fresh facts—how the pirate was a terrifying individual who "fire ate" and became "irate," and did all sorts of new things at the end of the lines. Will the dream ever be realized? Why not? After all, the writing of verses is perfectly simple. Any one can do it,—if only he has a private income.

Have you never felt a feeling
When you're gazing at the ceiling
That you ought to give up work, and take to poetry instead?
If a feeling, which is pleasant,
Is so noticeably present,
It's a pity to neglect it, just to ^eearn your daily bread.
When a feeling so sublime is,
Do not bother what the time is;
You can take a pen or pencil up, and write an ode in bed.

Next you ^{pay} to get it printed,
When you've written as I hinted,
But you never *sell* a copy—and you wish that you were dead,
Till a friend of yours, who knows 'er,
Brings an amateur composer,
Who has set the words to music, that will drive you off your head.
So you have to buy some copies
Of her song about the Poppies,
Or the Violets, or Lilies, or the Roses blushing Red.

It's a feeling, as I said,
That may come to you in bed;
But on *no* account suppress it for the sake of daily bread.

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Mais revenons à nos moutons—the prosperity of the musical world in the eighties. Those were the days when on Saturday afternoons people journeyed cheerfully to the wilds of Sydenham to hear Dr. Manns' Orchestra at the Crystal Palace. Alas ! at the close of the nineties the public supporters had dropped off to such an extent that the famous series of concerts had to be abandoned, and the Orchestra dispersed.

Those were the days when the "Popular" concerts were in full swing at the St. James's Hall. The "Pops" popped out merrily on Saturday afternoons, while the public popped in with equal light-heartedness. Nor did the Monday Evening ones meet with less satisfactory support. In the nineties, unhappily, the audiences began to grow gradually more and more attenuated, till at last a few years back the Saturday concerts made their final Pop, not a very loud one, and what "Punch" calls the "Glory o' Monday" silently vanished away like Lewis Carroll's Snark, which "was a Boojum, you see."

It is more especially of the St. James's Hall Ballad Concerts, and of some of the principal artists who appeared there between '80 and '90, that I am here proposing to speak. Mary Davies, Liza Lehmann, Antoinette Sterling, Reeves, Lloyd, Santley, Foli, and Maybrick—these are a few of the names which naturally recur to the mind. Then there were such singers as Mme. Lemmens-Sherrington, Mme. Valleria, Marie Krebs, Clara Samuëll, Eleanor Rees, Gertrude Griswold, Marian McKenzie, Agnes Larcom, and poor Alice Whitacre, (the wife of Dr. Luther Croll), whose early death caused such sadness to that large circle of friends by whom she was so universally beloved.

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Anna Williams was a singer whose name perhaps was more generally associated with Oratorio. Her wonderful powers of sight-reading made her services of inestimable benefit in the performance of any new or little-known works. One choral society in particular will long remember the invaluable assistance which she rendered them. The Farewell Concert given at the Albert Hall in 1897, when she had decided to retire from active professional work, was a memorable scene. It seemed as though the bouquets, and baskets of flowers presented to her would never cease to be brought forward. Like the oysters which came running up to gladden the eyes of the Walrus and the Carpenter, there were more—and more—and more.

Another name very well known to concert-goers was Marie Roze, whose son is the gifted composer, Raymond Roze, well known for the exquisite incidental music which he wrote for "Julius Cæsar," "Sword and Song," "Nell Gwynne," and other of the most artistic London productions of recent years. Then there were Carlotta Patti, the soprano, a sister of Adelina Patti, and wife of the 'cellist, Ernst de Munck, debarred from using her voice in opera owing to an unfortunate lameness; and Mme. Trebelli, of whom Antoinette Sterling received an amusing memento in the shape of a formal acknowledgment delivered to her husband upon his discharging a debt: "Received of John Mackinlay the sum of £.—s.—3d. for money lent, with thanks." The signature, Z. Trebelli, and the date were written across the penny stamp, which, with due regard to the "octopian" claims of Somerset House, had been carefully affixed to the receipt. There were, of course, Mme.

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Patey, Mme. Belle Cole, and Alice Gomez, newly arrived from Calcutta, wearing always Indian costume, with dark hair and complexion, and that rich voice, whose unusual quality, quite unlike the timbre of any European's, exercised so inevitable a fascination over the audience.

Again, there was that magnificent tenor, Joseph Maas, for several years one of the leading principals of the Carl Rosa Opera Company, a man devoted to sport of

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money lent*


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every description, but more especially to shooting and fishing. The latter, indeed, was the indirect cause of his death, which, like that of another great artist, Eugene Oudin, took place at the very moment when the ball of success seemed at his feet. Nor is any one likely to forget Barrington Foote with his eyeglass, or Plunket Greene, in those days at the very commencement of his career, but from the start showing all who heard him that a new singer had appeared on the scene who would inevitably make a name for himself by reason of a voice of beautiful quality, coupled with a true artistic instinct

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and strong dramatic feeling. Clara Butt had not yet made her début to astonish the world with her marvellous voice. Ada Crossley was still in Australia. It was a strange coincidence that these two great contraltos should have made their first public appearance at opposite sides of the globe in the same year, and within but a few months of each other. Genial Ben Davies, who was during the following years to achieve ever-increasing success, and eventually reach the proud position of the leading English tenor of the day, was being spoken of in 1886 as a "young singer" making rapid strides and showing great powers of expression.

Of the instrumentalists to be heard at the Ballads during those ten years, one of the warmest favourites was Wilma Norman-Neruda, afterwards Lady Hallé. One of the few "prodigies" who fulfilled early promise, she had made her début in Vienna when but eight years old, and three years later played in London at one of the Philharmonic Concerts. Among other important names were Sophie Menter, Fanny Davies fresh from her studies at Frankfort under Clara Schumann, Bottesini with his massive double bass, Tivadar Nachez, Frederic Lamond, "Master" Max Hambourg as he was then styled, and Vladimir de Pachmann, who appeared to feel somewhat lost in England and bewildered at the ways of its inhabitants. He always, however, became reassured when he found himself at any concert where Antoinette Sterling was singing. As he used to say to her, "Ich fühle mich so geschützt"—"I feel so protected."

How can one ever forget the familiar form of Sims Reeves, the smiling face, the wavy hair parted in the middle, the iron-grey moustache, the frilled shirt, white



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Antony the Strong Mackenzie with
Edmund Gosse's kind loan
"Joy Jubilee" March 20th 1889.

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kid gloves, and neat evening dress? How lightly he would trip on to the platform amid loud clapping to sing an encore, a sheet of music in his hand, instead of the book of words, which is the more usual substitute nowadays. As the first notes of symphony are being played by Naylor, a stillness falls on all, and this in its turn gives way to a fresh outburst of applause as they realize that he has chosen one of the old favourites, "Come into the Garden, Maud," "My Pretty Jane," or "The Jolly Young Waterman."

He commenced his career as a baritone, as was the case with Jean de Rezke. Charles Santley, on the contrary, first used to sing among the glorious company of tenors, going later to the other extreme of bass, before discovering that his real *métier* lay in baritone music. Reeves started at the bottom of the ladder. Indeed, three years after his début he was still only one of the small fry at Drury Lane Theatre. He first distinguished himself by making a hit with a small solo entrusted to him. This encouraged him to set out for Paris, where he studied for some time. At the conclusion he made his operatic début at Milan as Edgardo in "Lucia di Lammermoor," and finally returned to England, after four years' absence, for the London season of Italian opera.

Extremely careful of his voice, in a way perhaps too much so, he was always anxious to be absolutely at his best when appearing before any audience. Consequently, if he found the slightest symptoms of an approaching cold, and thought that he would in consequence be unable to give to his listeners the finest rendering of which he was vocally and artistically capable, the management

would receive that telegram, the wording of which became at last almost a byword : "Deeply regret a cold prevents my appearing to-night.—SIMS REEVES." It was merely a sense of over-conscientiousness with regard to his obligations towards the public which caused the greatest English tenor of his generation to disappoint audiences upon so many occasions.

Like most artistic people, Reeves was of a somewhat uneconomical turn of mind. In going North to fulfil an engagement in Scotland, he was known on more than one occasion to order a special train. The cost of this little extravagance must have swallowed up the greater part of the fee. Sometimes at an hotel he would take all the rooms immediately above his own suite, so as to ensure his slumber remaining undisturbed. Again, when singing at an evening concert in St. James's Hall, instead of returning to his home at Grange Mount, Norwood, he would often pass the night at one of the most expensive places, accompanied by his family.

One of the most amusing stories about him had its scene laid in the artists' room of St. James's Hall. Time, 3.30 on a November afternoon, during one of the Ballad Concerts. It was his usual practice, when not actually singing, to remain in the larger room at the back of the building. Here there was certainly a greater degree of comfort in the shape of a grand piano, several chairs, a table (on which a plate of biscuits and some liquid refreshment raised their inviting heads, like some oasis in a desert of sheet-music), and—what was more dear than all else to the feminine mind—a looking-glass. Only rarely would the famous tenor come for a few minutes into the smaller artists' room at the side of the plat-

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form. Here there was nothing to cheer the performers save a long bench running along either side: "Only this, and nothing more," to quote Edgar Allan Poe's "Raven."

On this particular day Reeves had wandered into the front room to hear a new ballad which was being brought out. A young tenor was singing at the St. James's Hall for the first time. In consequence, he was immensely puffed up with a sense of his own importance. He had been put on right at the beginning, as a forerunner, to prepare the way before the public favourites who were to come later in the programme.

Youth is full of reverence—for itself. When, therefore, the great Tenore Robusto strolled into the room, the little Tenore Obscuro marched up and said in the most patronizing way, "You'd better use the piano on the further side of the platform. You're down for a big song, and the nearer one is tuned up to full concert pitch." The other artists stared in sheer amazement at the calm impertinence of the new-comer, while the one and only Sims replied, "How dare you speak to ME like that? I shall certainly sing it at the high pitch. I'm not one of your squeezed-up baritones." He would have added more, but was stopped by his wife, who had followed to see that he did not talk too much. "Come back into the other room. You *must* keep quiet before going on to sing. You know how delicate your voice is, and how careful you ought to be."

Just before his turn had come to go on to the platform, his better half entered, went over to Sydney Naylor, the accompanist, and said in a loud voice, "Mr. Reeves will sing to the high-pitch piano." Then in a

whisper she added the pregnant words, "Please transpose the song down a semitone!"

Edward Lloyd, the other great English tenor of that period, was not only a brilliant vocalist, but a clever man of business. He was wise enough to lay by a large portion of his income. Consequently, he found himself in the happy position of being able to retire when at the full zenith of his powers, before any one could declare that he was beginning to lose his voice. His musical career may be said to have commenced at the age of seven, for then first he became a member of the choir at Westminster Abbey. Thence he moved to the Chapel Royal and to St. Andrew's, Wells Street. At the latter church the organist was Sir Joseph Barnby, who subsequently left the appointment to take up the post of Precentor at Eton College. This he retained for many years, only resigning in order to become Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, where he remained up to his death. At St. Andrew's, a great friendship sprang up between the two musicians, and a delightful memory of this is afforded by the following anecdote:—

"Joe" Barnby, as he was ever called, had written a new oratorio, "Rebekah." By those who had heard portions of it privately, it was supposed that the work would be an enormous success, one of the numbers, "Soft Southern Breezes," being specially beautiful. In spite of this for some reason it failed to make the impression which had been anticipated. Not long after it had been produced, the composer was invited by some intimate friends to join a large house-party at Eastertide. Before he had come, a novel surprise was arranged by his host in conjunction with Mr. Lloyd. On his arrival he

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was told that there would be an entertainment that evening in his honour. When after dinner all adjourned to the music-room, he had no idea what was going to take place. On entering the room, one of the party at once sat down at the piano, while Edward Lloyd and the other vocalists went up on to the platform. After all were settled in their places, the pianist commenced to play. "By Jove!" was the exclamation which sprang to Barnby's lips. With the opening chords he realized what was the nature of the entertainment which had been kept so secret. His look of surprise and pleasure at the compliment paid him was a delight to see, while the performers went through the music of his own work, "Rebekah."

A good tale which he used to tell concerned the famous singer Mme. Titiens. Owing to his intimate acquaintance with the oratorios, Sir Joseph's professional assistance was much sought by vocalists, who wished to make themselves conversant with the correct *tempi*, and renderings of the various arie. Among others whom he coached was the above-mentioned artist, and he used to attend her house for the purpose. On one occasion the hour fixed for rehearsal was somewhat early. Upon arriving the musician was ushered to the drawing-room. Here he was left to his own devices for about twenty minutes. Eventually his pupil appeared, and at once proceeded without delay to the business in hand. Suddenly in the midst of the air she caught sight of herself in the glass. With an agonized cry she rushed from the spot. What had she seen? A ghostly figure peering over her shoulder? A murderer, dagger in hand, prepared to strike her to the ground? Worse, much

worse! When the unhappy woman raised her eyes to the mirror, she realized that her hair was still done up in curl-papers. Her instructor had observed this immediately she had entered the room. Consideration for her feelings prompted him to ignore the situation.

Noblesse oblige!

Sir Joseph was always full of fun. Whenever he was about, there was sure to be nothing but laughter and jollity. As for the choir at the Albert Hall, they simply worshipped him. A letter typical of his humour was sent to a friend in response to a request that he should hear some one sing. "Dear Blank,—I will certainly see the young lady. But she seems to me to come from the wrong place for roaratorio. Paris ain't the shop for Handel and Co. Nevertheless, we will see the girl."

He used to be most amusing on the subject of the facial contortions indulged in by some singers. One of the sopranos, who appeared at the Albert Hall, had a habit of shooting her mouth down sideways, instead of opening it naturally. Foli had a similar way of manipulating his mouth. But in his case the jaw would move in the opposite direction to that affected by the lady. When both artists were taking part in a quartette, the result as it appeared to Barnby was, indeed, remarkable. The description which he used to give of the scene was the funniest imaginable. Everything else, so he would declare, seemed gradually to fade away. At last, to his fevered imagination, nothing remained save two enormous mouths shooting out in opposite directions, growing larger and larger, till they each threatened to suck him into a veritable maelström.

Signor Foli was a tall, powerful man with long curly

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hair and a deep *basso profundo* voice of extraordinary compass and power. As regards nationality, he was unmistakably Irish. Having, however, had operatic aspirations in days when no one could hope to enter the charmed circle without a foreign-sounding name, he promptly Italianized his own, Foley, and adopted the prefix Signor. During the off season he used to spend a good deal of time out in California, where he owned a ranch. Here he would fish, ride, shoot, and lead the healthy out-of-door life of which he was so fond. Again, it used to be his great delight to run down to Monte Carlo and indulge in a gentle flutter at the tables. Unfortunately, upon these trips he did not always meet with complete financial success. On several occasions, indeed, he might have had considerable difficulty in returning to England, had he not taken the precaution of buying a return ticket when he set out on the expedition. One evening he arrived from one of these outings just in time for a concert engagement in London, and stalked into the artists' room with the remark: "Sure, Oi've lost every penny Oi have. If it wasn't for what Oi'm making to-night, Oi shouldn't have any at all."

Foli had one of those cheerful Hibernian dispositions which looked on the bright side of everything, and the contretemps did not seem to have upset him in the least.

With his splendid physique he always had a supreme contempt for any sign of effeminacy in his fellow men. In undergraduate days the writer went to supper with him at the Clarendon Hotel, when he came one term to sing up at Oxford. After having attended to the

wants of the inner man, thereby making a tremendous hole in the pickled onions for which he had an insatiable appetite, he settled down to a little food for the mind, not forgetting the soothing presence of My Lady Nicotine. During conversation the name of a certain violinist came up. "Don't talk to me of that spalpeen. Sure he's got a face loike a milk pudding."

Every one who knew Foli had heard of his parrot, with its retentive memory and facility for mimicry. Visitors would be sometimes considerably "flabbergasted" by a *scena* which the basso and his wife had carefully rehearsed with the bird. First Polly would say in a deep voice, "Have you got any money for me?" Then in a high screech it would reply, "No, I shan't give you any more." The answer to this would come in a low tone: "You might let me have a fiver"; to which the other returned, "Not one farthing." "But I *must* have some. Come on!" "No, I won't, I *won't*, I *WON'T*!" With these thrilling words the drama would be brought to an end.

The Irish-Italian was one of the few artists obliged to leave the concert platform owing to an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Incidentally one may call to mind another instance of this, when Patti was taking part in a duet with Santley at Brecon. During the piece a wasp arrived on the scene, and buzzed vigorously in front of the vocalists. Finally, after hearing the honeyed notes issuing from the diva's throat, it determined to investigate for itself the source of so much sweetness. The efforts which the enraptured insect made to get at Madame Patti's mouth were altogether too much for her companion. After a few moments the music

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came to an abrupt termination, and mirth reigned supreme.

With Foli, the cause was not one of *force majeure*. It was, with him, entirely due to the accompanist, Naylor.

It was during a provincial tour. The *basso profundo* was down on the programme to take part in the well-known duet for tenor and bass, "Love and War." One day, during the railway journey, a good deal of chaff passed between the two as to the position of accompanists. Foli asserted that they were mere figure-heads to the party—nonentities who had to do nothing but sit on a piano-stool throughout the concert. Finally, he suggested that on future occasions they might dispense with Naylor altogether, and borrow a waxwork from Madame Tussaud instead. The other laughed good-humouredly, and remarked, "I don't know about that. In fact, I'll bet you half a crown I upset you in one of your numbers to-night." "Done, my bhoy!" roared the basso, and dismissed the matter from his mind.

Eight o'clock came, and the concert commenced. Things went so smoothly for some time, that the artists really began to think there was something in the waxwork idea after all. But it was the lull before the storm. The time came for "Love and War." The vocalists strolled on, followed at a respectful distance by Naylor, who gave a wink to the other artists as he left them. The first portion was written for the two voices, and no cue of approaching doom was given by the pianist. Then came a short solo for the tenor, in which he pointed out his tender feelings of Love. Instead, however, of the soft rippling music from "the man behind," there burst out a thunderous accompaniment, as though descriptive

of some tremendous cannonade. The singer finished somehow, though it was as much as he could do to prevent his gravity from being upset. Then came the contrast. Foli, with his enormous voice, bellowed forth the terrors of War. In response to his stirring cries of "raging battle" and "cannons rattle" there came from the piano an absurd little pastoral accompaniment in the treble, suggestive of rippling brooks and bleating lambs. Ever and anon was heard the gentle call of the "cuckoo," which had a distinct *arrière pensée*. Foli tried in vain to keep back his chuckles during the solo, while he heard the accompaniment grow more and more ridiculous. At last to remain grave proved beyond his powers. He was forced to abandon the unequal fight and walk off the platform roaring with laughter, while the victor, remaining at his post, brought the duet to an abrupt termination with a few chords of "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Sydney Naylor was a man with quite an uncanny control over his instrument. Madame Sterling used to say that when he played her accompaniments he would make little artistic changes, which acted as an inspiration to her in a most wonderful way. Often they suggested an entirely new reading of the words, or fresh effect in the melody of the song.

At other times, however, the imp of mischief would be strong in him. Then he would introduce humorous interpolations, which were so unexpected as to send the performers into fits of laughter. The contralto was wont to relate how she would be taking part in some quartette from one of the Italian operas. After the first few bars, there would creep into the accompaniment phrases

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from "Pop Goes the Weasel," or something equally inappropriate. These would continue to appear in the melody, or the bass, or as a fugue, till it seemed as though the performers would never be able to last out to the end without laughing. Another favourite trick of Naylor's was to start a soprano's song as written, but, each time there were a few bars of symphony for the piano, he would introduce some subtle little alterations which resulted in the next verse being sung in a higher key. He repeated this manœuvre so often that finally the soprano, without quite realizing what had happened, would find herself hardly able to reach notes which she knew were only G's in her own music. In the case of Antoinette Sterling, he would do exactly the opposite. Gradually and almost imperceptibly the pitch would sink lower and lower, till she found herself finishing the song in a voice which seemed to come from her boots.

Among other accomplishments, Naylor had the power of being able to transpose any piece of music at sight into whatever key might be desired. There were not many accompanists who could be depended upon to do this with any degree of certainty. Among the elect was the veteran Henry Bird, whose name appeared on the programme of so many important concerts during the last twenty years. For years, when through Sir Walter Parratt, "Master of the Musick," any artist received a command to appear before the late Queen, Mr. Bird would be called upon to "officiate at the piano." This, we believe, is the correct phrase. So often did the so-called "officiation" take place, that at last one expected upon each fresh occasion to see a notice in the Court Cir-

cular, "Her Majesty drove out this morning accompanied by Mr. Henry Bird—in his usual tactful manner."

Comparatively few people realize the important part played by the hard-worked and little-thanked accompanist in the success of a piece. He can often make or mar the performance. His position strikes one as resembling that of the coxswain at riverside regattas. If the oarsmen win the race, they pat each other on the back and say, "Well rowed!" If they lose, they all thump the cox on the back, and say with one voice, "Badly steered." So, too, the singer goeth forth to sing. If he makes a success, his bosom swells with pride, and he says to himself, "I am a great artist." But if he makes a failure, his bosom swells with anger, and he says to himself—or, better still, to another singer who has made a similar fiasco—"He's a rotten accompanist." The ladies, of course, do not make use of that epithet. They probably substitute the word "shocking." All of which is enough to make self-respecting accompanists lose their hair with the vocalists.

If they confine themselves to doing so in a metaphorical sense, well and good. At a concert which took place some years ago, the unfortunate instrumentalist "lost his hair" in the literal meaning of the phrase. The singer was Michael Maybrick, better known to the musical public of the present day as Stephen Adams—a *nom de guerre* under which he has composed many songs of world-wide fame. For years he was one of the most popular baritones, and at this particular concert was down for "The Midshipmite." All went well until thinking to help by turning over the music, he stretched out his hand. While doing so, he began the

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refrain, "With a long, long pull, And a strong strong pull." Unhappily, in moving his arm the cuff-link caught in the pianist's capillary covering. The audience promptly saw the hair lifted gradually from the head, and discovered, to their amusement, that it was a wig. The victim suddenly realized what was happening, clapped both hands to his head, and was just in time to "effect a clever save," in football parlance.

The way Maybrick was left to go on by himself while the wig was being disentangled reminds one of another experience. A singer was making his first appearance with Jules Rivière's Orchestra. The piece which he was rendering was an operatic aria of considerable intricacy. The band, unfortunately, had not had opportunity for more than one short run through. All went well till a noise at the back of the arena called the conductor's attention from the music before him. When his eyes returned from their exploration, they searched in vain for the proper place. He tried to keep up a beat, while he eagerly scanned page after page of the score. He met with no success in this effort. The beat, in consequence, became fitful, and finally ceased altogether. At this the orchestra, who had been getting more and more shaky, tailed off one by one, until at last the vocalist was left to finish by himself.

If there was any singer who would have gone through such a contretemps as the above without being upset, it was Nikita, an American soprano, who attracted a good deal of attention when she came over some years ago.

Her style was something quite new to England, and did not meet with unanimous approval from her fellow artists. One of her first appearances was made at the

house of Joseph Bennett, the musical critic of the "Daily Telegraph," at one of his Sunday evening gatherings. Most of the leading singers were present, but this did not abash Nikita in the smallest degree. When asked to sing, she handed her music to the accompanist, and took up her position by the piano with the most complete *sang-froid*. Before one of the most critical audiences which it would have been possible to bring together in a private drawing-room, she gave "The Last Rose of Summer." When the first bars were struck, a vocalist, who was present, raised her eyebrows at the presumption of the new-comer in attempting a song with which she herself had made a big reputation. As it progressed, given in a most unorthodox way according to the accepted British point of view, the listening singer's face assumed a look of disgust. The climax arrived with the last verse. In this the American tried to give additional effect by plucking the leaves of a rose one by one. These she proceeded to drop while the last lines were being given. "Well," remarked the English soprano to a fellow professional seated next her, "we don't do that in *England*—thank goodness! We go in for *legitimate* singing." With these words she raised her glasses, looked Nikita up and down, and continued, "How old do they say she is? Sixteen? As far as her ankles, possibly. She gets at least ten years older—higher up."



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MADAME ADELINA PATTI

CHAPTER XII

MORE MUSICIANS

TO be a guest of Adelina Patti at her castle in Wales is to pass through an experience which is more like a visit to Fairyland than anything else. The Queen of Song is one of the most delightful hostesses imaginable. She has an extraordinary gift for putting visitors thoroughly at their ease from the first moment of their arrival. The plan is simple. "You are perfectly free to do whatever you like all day long," she says *en effet* to each. "There will be carriages at the door at three o'clock for those who care for a drive. Those, who do *not*, will, I hope, be able to find some congenial amusement. All I ask of you is that you will meet me at eight o'clock for dinner." On retiring for the night the guests are asked at what time they wish to be called. In the morning a servant inquires what they prefer for breakfast: each is free to choose "whatever his heart most desireth, yea even that which he yearneth to eat," as the Hebrew poets would put it. The meal is usually served in the bedroom. When the morning toilet has been completed, there follows a game of tennis, a country walk or a ramble through the grounds of Craig-y-nos. Soon after luncheon, which is more or less an informal meal, those who are fond of drives meet

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in the hall and await their hostess. At the appointed time Madame Patti makes her appearance. After welcoming her friends she drives off in the first carriage, quite in the style of Royalty : yet so charmingly is this done that it seems only natural. At dinner, which is the great function of the day, she wears some of the Orders and Royal gifts which have been bestowed upon her at the various European courts. Perhaps some favoured guest is allowed to choose whether the châtelaine of the castle shall don the famous set of turquoises or some other portion of her splendid collection of jewellery. In the drawing-room afterwards her talents as a linguist are displayed by the way in which she converses with all her guests, each in their own tongue. The evening winds up with a dance, or a game of billiards, of which she is passionately fond, or an adjournment to the bijou theatre, where the *prima donna* pours forth a wealth of song.

To the poor living in the neighbourhood she is a fairy godmother, providing them with coal and all manner of comforts. Every year, too, it is her custom to get up a charity concert, at which her musical friends are delighted to assist. For many years Antoinette Sterling used to go down regularly to take part. Herr Wilhelm Ganz, the pianist, being one of the diva's earliest friends in England was always one of the party. Madame Patti on these occasions would always give the artists a souvenir, which took the form of a brooch, a ring, or a tie-pin, chosen specially to suit the taste of each. Instead of presenting them personally, it used to be her pretty custom to hide them away before dinner in the folds of the napkins. Here every one on sitting

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down to table would find the little packet awaiting them.

Wonderful indeed has been that career, during which she is reputed to have made something like a million pounds. Born at Madrid, the daughter of a Sicilian tenor, she sang in New York at the age of seven. Nine years later she made her *début* there as Lucia. Two years later she appeared in London, meeting with a tremendous success, and this followed her wherever she sang. Her first marriage proved an unfortunate one, but compensation came in the happiness of her union with the late Breton tenor, Ernesto Nicolini. Of the latter many stories were told. Specially memorable was a remark which he made at one of the impromptu dances already mentioned.

"We will dance a very long time before supper," he said, offering his arm to a sweet *débutante*, "and then no more. It is so hard to dance when the stomach is full. Do you not find it so?" Standing as she did, "where brook and river meet"—("with reluctant feet," may have been a true description in the Jane Austen period, but, in the strenuousness of modern life, the epithet seems to call for revision)—the young lady considered all reference to the internal economy of man most indelicate. The personal turn which the end of the remark had taken was too much for her. She nearly sank through the floor with confusion, to the utter bewilderment of her host.

Nicolini's astonishment was almost equal to that of a clever miniature painter, who had arranged to do a portrait of a certain professional beauty. An "Actress" the lady in question styled herself in her letters. She

had, however, probably never been on the stage in her life. Certainly her name was quite unknown to London theatre-goers. She shall figure in this moving tale as Miss "Norval."

Terms being agreed upon, the new client arrived for the first sitting.

It was Summer. The painter was delighted with her visitor. She found her to be modest and retiring, with an enchanting smile, the fairest of flaxen hair, a smooth skin, and a strawberry and cream complexion. Her dainty hand, with its long tapering fingers, was set off by one or two, or, at the very most, nine pearl and turquoise rings. A thin dress of light blue, decked out with true lover's knots of pale pink, together with a simple brooch, completed what should prove material for a taking miniature. All through the hour the *ingénue* rippled on of the joys of the country, and the pleasures of the simple life. Another sitting was arranged for a fortnight later, before the holidays had commenced, and with a cooing "Good-bye" the angelic creature floated out of the studio, leaving behind a lingering odour of honey and hayfields.

The appointed day arrived. It was a Saturday. Alas! no vision of loveliness appeared. Instead, there came the pathetic telegram, "Thousand regrets rehearsing all day Grampiana Norval." The artist gulped down a sympathetic sob as she thought of this poor child of nature shut up in a stuffy theatre away from the green trees, the blue sky, and all that made life dear to her. Nor was the feeling of gloom dispelled, until a closer examination of the missive brought to light the fact that it had been dispatched from Brighton.

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"The months passed by," just as they do in books, and in real life too sometimes.

It was Autumn. Summer was over. The leaves were falling. As they fell, the trees seemed more bare. The weather became colder. The warmth departed. The days grew shorter. The nights became longer. It was, indeed, Autumn. At last a telegram came, "Can I have a sitting Grampiana." It had been so long since word had come from Miss Norval, that at first the message conveyed nothing. Could the artist have been mistaken for the proprietress of a chicken-farm? Lost for a few moments in deep wonderment, gradually the slow wheels of memory revolved and brought before her eyes that picture of an angel visitant in the warm days of July. And now it was October: the leaves were falling. An appointment was sent for the following morning, and at last—at last—after an interminable interval—the day arrived. A ring. A knock. A start. The door opens, and there enters—— But, stay, can this be she? No! Yes, it *is* Grampiana, a symphony of brown, orange, and dark red, ruby rings on her fingers, and an emerald brooch at her throat. And her hair? Auburn. A wealth of Rossettian locks, with a warm southern complexion to match. A slight gasp. A look of pained surprise, and the painter settles down to her work. As a preliminary, she finds it necessary to make a number of alterations in the colouring of hair and face. While thus occupied, she is regaled with—well, they are no longer "Plain Tales from the Hills." Instead, there are some Highly Coloured Stories from "The Wood"—that of the Sainted Evangelist—anecdotes of a deeper hue. In bidding farewell, the "Actress" regretted that

she could not come again before Christmas. The doctor had ordered her abroad. Her health called for attention. The hardships of constant rehearsal, the glare of the footlights, the strain of playing a leading part—curiously enough, she did not particularize as to title—all had told upon a naturally delicate constitution. Absolute rest was what she required. A quiet existence far from the ken of man. Some secluded spot high up on the Swiss mountains. Possibly a nunnery in Italy. On her return, she would write to the artist.

It was Winter. The snow was on the ground, etc. A letter came from—Paris! From it the painter gathered that the poor invalid was returning. In due course she arrived. Her hair was of raven blackness, her complexion white as the snowy mountain peaks, her lips red as the carmine paint, which had given them that rich colour. And for jewellery? Diamonds. With a sigh the artist took up the miniature, on which she had wasted so much labour, looked at the original, then at her own attempt, gave another sigh, and threw the piece of ivory into the fire.

“I must frankly admit, Miss Norval, that I haven’t the remotest idea what you are really like. Certainly I must give up all notion of painting you—at any rate, until some one discovers a new ‘chameleon’ medium to work in, which will change colour with the seasons. As a matter of interest, though, do describe to me your natural complexion!” “I haven’t any to speak of, I’m afraid.” “And your hair?” “Mouse colour,” replied the lady actress, as she swept haughtily out of the house, hailed a cab, and drove off. Her last words were addressed to the Jehu, “Drive to the Carlton!”

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The mention of hair leads one naturally to the discussion of popular pianists.

To reach their position instrumentalists have to go through years of almost incessant practice, and Vladimir de Pachmann, the Polish pianist, renowned for his interpretation of Chopin, was no exception. As a boy he would be shut up in a room devoid of all furniture save a piano and a music stool. There he would be left sometimes for ten hours a day, the food being passed in to him. This went on not merely for weeks or months, but for years.

When Pachmann made his début, success did not come to him at once. "Greatness is born of suffering," and for years he worked without making either position or money, undergoing every kind of privation in the cause of his art. As he says at the present day, "When I wanted the money, the public would not pay to hear me. Now, when I do not want it so much, they pour golden guineas down my throat." Much the same were the experiences of the mighty Paderewski, and there are few more pathetic stories than those told of his early struggles, and the lamentable sufferings which were borne by those who were nearest and dearest to him.

We are accustomed nowadays to see pianists perform entirely from memory. Thirty years ago, however, it was almost an invariable rule to play from the music. Pachmann was one of the first to dispense with the score. In so doing he was not always quite successful. He was on one occasion taking part in an important orchestral concerto at one of the Philharmonic concerts. He came on to the platform and sat down at his instru-

ment, as was his wont, without any music before him. He started off gaily, and went through the first movement without a hitch. When, however, he had begun a few bars of the second, memory played him false. He stumbled, went wrong, and finally was obliged to make a fresh beginning. This time he went through perfectly well, but the mistake caused considerable annoyance to the members of the Society which had engaged him.

A few weeks afterwards he was due to play the same concerto at one of the Crystal Palace Saturday Concerts with Dr. August Manns' orchestra. Now it happened that the veteran musician had been present on the previous occasion, and had marked, learned, and inwardly digested what had occurred. When, therefore, Pachmann arrived on the platform and walked over to the piano, it was only to find a copy of the music staring him in the face. Nor was this all. To make assurance doubly sure, the wily conductor told off a man to sit beside the instrumentalist and turn over the music for him throughout the performance.

One of the funniest tales about Pachmann concerns his behaviour after one of the provincial concerts. Mr. F——, the entrepreneur who was managing the tour, accompanied the party round the country to superintend all arrangements. One night, at the hotel in which they were stopping, he was awakened by a violent knocking at the bedroom door. "Who's there?" "Boots, sir." "What time is it?" "Three o'clock!" "Then what the blank, blank, blank do you mean by coming at such an hour?" "Please you're wanted, sir!" "Wanted? By whom?" "Mr. Dee Patchman, sir. He says there's a mouse in his room. I've been looking for it every-

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where and can't see it, but he says he won't go to bed till it is found, and has sent me to fetch you." The unfortunate entrepreneur slipped on some clothes, and, in no happy mood at this latest managerial duty thrust upon him, went down to try to calm "Mr. Dee Patchman," as the Boots had styled him. He searched in a half-hearted way, and then, seeing no sign of the "wee tim'rous beastie," tried to persuade the other to retire under the sheltering quilt, and there forget his troubles.

"But it ees impossible, my dear Meester F——. I cannot sleep until she is found."

And indeed Pachmann, standing on a chair and holding up his skirts, or rather nightgown, cut a sorry figure. He could not even be prevailed on to come down from his perch, and step on to the floor. At last F—— had a brilliant idea. He hustled around for a few moments; then he gave cry of triumph. "Ah, here it is! Shall I show it to you?" "No, no, Meester F——, take her away, take her away!" The reply was fortunate, for the other had only made pretence of finding the mouse. "Please, please, send her off!" F—— at once opened the door and pretended to let it go, making a great uproar the while to the infinite sorrow of the other occupants of the passage, from whose rooms sounds of discontent floated out on the early morning air. Then at last Pachmann, heaving a sigh of gratified relief, crawled into bed, and all was once more "still on the 'Potomac.'"

In addition to Vladimir de Pachmann, there is a lady pianist specially eminent as an exponent of Chopin's works—Nathalie Janotha. From her earliest years of

girlhood she showed exceptional talent. When she was studying in the Hochschule at Berlin, the Emperor, who had already heard her in Weimar, undertook to pay for her musical instruction during three years. Further, he was so delighted with her playing, that he promised to grant any favour she liked to ask. The young student, with generosity, at once thought of her brother. She asked that a commission might be given him in the army, and the request was quickly gratified.

Since coming to England, Mdlle. Janotha has been the recipient of constant favours and honours at the hands of Royalty. Especially devoted to her playing was Queen Victoria, and many were the presents received from her late Majesty. Probably no instrumentalist of the fair sex has ever received so many commands to appear at the various Courts of Europe. There is a well-known English saying, "See Naples, and die." One might add a further piece of advice: "Hear Janotha play Chopin, and live." The former saying was once adapted to the sweet uses of advertisement upon the concert tour of a certain violinist with singularly infelicitous effect. At each town he visited, large placards were put up, "Hear Blankoffski, and Die."

It was taken by most people as a friendly counsel to keep away. Certainly in the town, at which the strange poster caught the writer's eye, the attendance was of such attenuated dimensions, that even though the audience *had* all died after hearing the violinist, there would have been but a very imperceptible rise in the death-rate of that particular district. It was read, in fact, much as was the telegram of the budding actor who

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was understudying a principal part at one of the London theatres. One day his opportunity arrived. He received a message that he was to play the part that evening. Full of *joie de vivre*, he rushed to the nearest post office and wired to the author of the piece, "I am playing the part of So-and-so to-night." When on the stroke of seven he arrived at the stage door, the Commissionaire came forward with a telegram. In feverish haste he tore it open, and read the reply : "Thanks for the warning."

This was somewhat after the style of a remark which Sir Alexander Mackenzie once made to a girl who had asked for his opinion on her voice. After hearing two verses of a song he stopped her. "Tell me, are you fond of singing?" "Oh, yes, immensely," she replied, in a tone which brimmed over with enthusiasm. Sir Alexander raised his eyebrows, looked intensely puzzled, and answered, "What a very curious thing."

When a performance of the "Mock Doctor" was being prepared at the Royal Academy of Music, of which Sir Alexander is the Principal, Signor Alberto Randegger came down to hear one of the earlier rehearsals. The Chevalier has the bump of humour strongly developed, and upon this occasion was feeling in particularly buoyant spirits. After the ladies had sung one of the choruses, he turned to them with a twinkle in his eye, and said, "Is that all you can do? Really, I don't see that there is anything left for you but marriage."

Dr. Cummings, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, is another musician who is fond of a bit of fun. When before the public as a tenor vocalist, he used to

be specially enamoured of old English songs. Of them all, perhaps his favourite was "Once I Loved a Maiden Fair," in which occur the following words :—

I the wedding-ring had got,
Wedding clothes provided,
Sure the Church would bind a knot
Ne'er to be divided.

It used to be his delight on coming to the last two lines to make a small alteration, which he would render with a twinkle in his eye.

The version substituted by him was the following :—

Sure the Church would bind a knot,
(K) *not* to be divided !

which was distinctly ambiguous.

Dr. Cummings is one of those happy people, to whom all are attracted from the first moment of acquaintance. It is absolutely impossible to imagine his being unpopular or disliked by any who come into contact with him. Possessing that quiet, genial temperament which nothing can ruffle, he is never known to speak an unkind or disagreeable word of any man. If something unpleasant has to be said as part of his duties at the School of Music, the bitter pill is so thickly covered with sugar, that the recipient does not realize at the time that anything has been swallowed but sweetness.

In his active concert days it was his practice to wear very low-cut evening waistcoats. This once led to an unexpected *dénouement*. On proceeding to don his dress-clothes at a provincial hotel, he was annoyed to find that he had forgotten to pack his trousers. What was to be done? The lamentation of Orpheo, "Che farò senza Euridice?" "What shall I do without Euri-

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dice?" was as nothing compared to the heartrending position in which the distinguished musician of modern times found himself. He summoned the maid. Could she suggest a solution of the difficulty? She could. "I will try and borrow some, sir."

After a few minutes she returned, brandishing in her hand a pair of rather shiny, black trousers. All impatience, he seized them from her, locked the door, and prepared to don them.

Alas! they were designed for one of nobler, more majestic build than he. So large were they, that they stretched upward far beyond the confines of the waistcoat, and covered part of the lily-white shirt. This he quickly remedied by turning them down inside. In due course he arrived at the concert hall, and went on to sing. The middle of the second verse had been barely reached, when some tittering from the audience in the front rows made the performer conscious that something must be wrong. He looked down, and beheld some four inches of stern, uncompromising black cloth stretching above the spotless white waistcoat. Poor Cummings could do nothing but clasp the music to his breast, as the father clasped his child in the "Erl King," finish the song with all speed, and rush wildly from the platform. Another man would have sworn, but the hero of the adventure was saved much sorrow by his sense of humour. On reaching the artists' room, he only shook his head, and gazed at the trousers more in sorrow than in anger.

Dr. Cummings gives an interesting illustration of the phenomenal memory cultivated by some musicians. Some years ago, when Wagnerian music was only just coming

into vogue, he went to spend the evening with Dr. Hans Richter. They began discussing operatic music. Among other compositions, "Tristan und Isolde" was mentioned. Upon the visitor saying that the little he had heard he did not care about, Richter expostulated: "Wagner's operas are not to be judged from mere extracts. If you heard the whole, you could not help liking it. Let me show you." The celebrated conductor sat down at the piano, and, entirely from memory, proceeded to play the entire work, singing the vocal parts, and bringing out the instrumental effects. Truly a remarkable performance.

It is not only of England that Dr. Cummings has recollections. He went on a tour through America, which was full of weird adventures. In addition to himself, the party included Edith Wynne, Mr. and Mrs. Patey, and Charles Santley. The local papers at some of the smaller towns were very much down on them. In those days, English artists did not meet with the hearty welcome which is accorded to them at the present time. Instead of criticizing, they made personal remarks. Santley's singing, one of them gravely stated, might have been better judged had he worn a less massive watch chain. As for Patey, they spoke of him as being principally famous for having married the *prima donna*. This so annoyed him that he retired soon after his return.

It was during a concert tour through England, in which Dr. Cummings was the tenor, that Mme. Patey became engaged to her future husband. In earlier days she had, as Miss Whytock, been a member of Sir Michael Costa's choir at Exeter Hall. Here she

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was occasionally asked to sing solos. It was not until after her marriage that much success really came to her. Patey placed her to study under the leading contralto of that time, Mme. Sainton Dolby. On the death of the latter, an arrangement was come to with Mr. Dolby by which he should pass on to Mme. Patey as much as possible of the work which had previously been performed by his wife.

A strange incident happened in connexion with the death of Mme. Patey. It will be remembered that her life came to an end under most dramatic circumstances at a concert in Sheffield, after she had sung "The Banks of Allan Water," which finished—

There a corse lay she.

Not long after this, Madame Sterling was engaged to sing at the same hall. On being taken up to the room at the hotel which had been reserved for her, she took an instinctive dislike to it the moment she entered. Thinking no more about it, however, she dressed and set out for the concert. On coming back she went upstairs to her room, and had the same feeling as before. In vain she tried to shake it off. There was a restlessness which refused to be overcome. At last she could stand it no longer, and rang for the maid. "Tell the proprietress that I'm sorry to put her to trouble at this time of night ; but I don't like the room, and I wish to be moved to another." The girl went off, and returned almost at once to say that a fresh one was ready for her. When the contralto met the manageress in the morning, she explained her reason for wanting to move. A look half of surprise, half of terror, came

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into the woman's face. At first she would give no reason for this, but finally the fact was dragged out of her that the body of Mme. Patey had been taken to that very room after her death.

There was something strange, almost prophetic, in the fact that at the last concert in which Antoinette Sterling took part, given at East Ham, on 15 October, 1903, the song which she chose for her final encore should have been "Crossing the Bar." In less than three months the end came. There was something very beautiful in her public career being brought to a close by the poem of Tennyson's, whose words expressed so completely her own feelings with regard to "Passing On," as she loved to call it.

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have Crossed the Bar.

At this last appearance it happened also that the concert-giver had engaged Evangeline Florence, a singer with whom Antoinette Sterling had always been in the greatest sympathy, and whom she had specially asked to make one of her party upon her "Farewell Tour" through England in 1902, the other artists being Miss Wyllie Jaeger, violinist, Walter German Reed, accompanist, and the writer of these pages, baritone.

When Mrs. Crerar, the name borne by the gifted vocalist in private life, first came over to make her début in England, she was considerably upset to find herself advertised as the "New Eiffel Tower Soprano," in allusion to her phenomenally high notes. It was as

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an artistic singer that the charming American wished to be known, not merely as a singer who could go up to an unusual height. Since then her desire has been fully gratified. It would be difficult indeed to point to any one who sings with more artistic feeling, quite apart from her brilliancy of execution.

It was by hard work, and incessant striving to improve, that her position was obtained. For years after she had made a success she continued her studies with Mrs. Lehmann, who, under the initials "A. L.," brought out many beautiful original compositions and arrangements of old melodies. A most cultured musician, and a daughter of Robert Chambers the publisher, she had married Rudolf Lehmann, the distinguished subject and portrait painter who died not long ago. Two of their daughters married respectively Barry Pain, the author, and Charles Goetz, while the other, Liza, made a name for herself as a singer. Afterwards she abandoned this career and devoted herself to musical compositions, in which field she has done still greater things. She has written a number of perfectly charming songs, as well as joining Owen Hall (the ever popular "Jimmy Davis," as he is always called in theatrical circles) in the musical farce "Sergeant Brue." But it is in the song cycles that she has made her greatest and most lasting success. The earliest attempt in this line was "In a Persian Garden." It met with instant popularity, and was followed in turn by "In Memoriam," "The Daisy Chain," and "More Daisies."

The first performance of "The Daisy Chain" was a memorable occasion. It took place at her house in St. John's Wood. Her circle of friends was large, and

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the accommodation distinctly limited. There was only one way out of the difficulty. Performances were arranged for two consecutive afternoons, a different quartette of artists taking part in each. Even so, the room refused to hold more than a portion of the guests. The remainder overflowed into the hall and up the staircase.

The opening number met with unanimous approval. As solo followed solo, each if possible more captivating than the last, excitement rose higher and higher, until at the conclusion of the cycle there was a scene of enthusiasm which will be long remembered by those who were present. Nor did the success which it met with at the hands of the public fall in any way short of that which had been prophesied at this first hearing. "Daisy Chain" tours went out, "Daisy Chain" concerts were given, "Daisy Chain" At Homes took place. In fact, during the ensuing seasons it was so completely the vogue, that any one who wished to be sure of having a full hall decided upon including "The Daisy Chain" without a moment's hesitation.

During the December after the cycle had been so successfully launched, an episode occurred which might have had a very serious termination. We were living almost exactly opposite to Mme. Liza Lehmann's house at the time. It was Christmas Day. We sat down to the usual indigestible fare which is considered necessary to celebrate the Festival. Suddenly a loud crash outside made us rush to the front door. In the middle of the street lay a four-wheeler tilted on to its side. The cabby standing by his horse gave no uncertain signs of resembling the vehicle in being a

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growler. By the sounds issuing from within, our strongly-developed Sherlockian instinct drew the swift, unerring deduction that the interior of the cab was not altogether free from occupants. Nor were we wrong. On going closer to the scene of the accident, whom should we see peering through the window but our unfortunate neighbour. The door was jammed. All we could do was to stand on the upturned side of the cab and pull out the occupants. The party were rescued from their precarious position, one by one, without much difficulty. At last only the nurse was left. She was a woman nobly planned and of stately proportions. We tugged away for a time, but she remained immovable. It was a question of mathematical dimensions. The Greater, the maid, could not be subtracted from the Less, the window. A bystander suggested that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the knee of an idol, but there was little comfort in the thought. "Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt!" was all that we could mutter. Suddenly Providence cut the Gordian knot: the door "came off in our 'and," as the handles of valuable china cups and vases are wont to do when the parlour-maid breaks them.

CHAPTER XIII

LEIGHTON AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

THE Presidency of the Royal Academy of Arts is a position which calls for something more than mere prominence among contemporary painters. To be in every way successful the chosen one must be a courtier, a *persona grata* in society, a good speaker, a linguist, and a man of culture. In a certain Gaiety piece, the question was asked, "Is your mother entertaining this season?" and brought the delightful answer, "Not very." For the query, "Is the President of the Academy entertaining this year?" to bring forth any reply other than "Extremely" would point to his being a failure in what was required socially of those who held the post.

It would have been difficult to imagine any one more eminently suited for all this than the late Lord Leighton of Stretton. Sir Frederick—for it was only during the last month of his life that the honour of a peerage was conferred upon him—had every necessary qualification. His artistic training had been received at the hands of the most distinguished masters, and during those early years of study he went to Rome, Florence, Frankfort, Berlin, Paris, and Brussels. At the age of thirty-four he was elected an Associate of the Academy, five years later attained full membership, and in 1878 was chosen

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as President, receiving his knighthood in the same year. Of exquisite taste, polished in manner, tactful, a man of the world, easy of conversation, a diplomatist, a fluent speech-maker, and of ample means, he was probably an ideal P.R.A. There was, moreover, something singularly impressive in his appearance as well as in his utterance, which could scarcely fail to call forth respect from all who came into contact with him. So much was this the case, that he was usually depicted in the humorous sketches of the day as a modern Apollo.

As an artist, he was ever devoted to the smooth method of oil painting as opposed to the rough. So far did he pursue this style that his pictures appeared to have almost a waxen surface. It used to be related at the Academy art schools, in years gone by, how he had stopped before the work of a student who was endeavouring to depict the face of a girl upon his canvas. The young man was doing so with a very rough surface indeed. The President stood still for some moments, gazing sorrowfully at the picture. "Yes, my dear fellow, very nice! Very nice indeed! But let me assure you that the bloom on a maiden's cheek has nothing whatever in common with a gravel path."

Sir Frederick once met with an uncomfortable experience, afterwards utilized for one of that amusing "Punch" series, "Things one would rather have left unsaid." At a very swell dinner party the host had arranged that he should take in a certain Lady B——. She did not happen to catch his name, and had no clue to the identity of her distinguished neighbour at table. All went well until they entered on the subject of art. This brought up, as a matter of course, the exhibition at Burlington House.

After a few sweeping remarks, she commenced discussing Leighton's principal exhibit of the year. In no unmeasured terms she expressed her disapproval. She considered it simply horrible. "But what is *your* opinion?" she inquired, turning on him her most engaging smile. "Well, really, madame, I must ask you to excuse me from offering an opinion. I fear that it could not be otherwise than biassed. You see, *I am Leighton.*"

Did she gracefully apologize, and flit on to some safer topic? Not a bit of it! Lady B—— promptly rushed in where angels fear to tread. "Oh, I'm so sorry; but then, you know, I don't pretend to understand anything about painting myself. I only repeat what every one else is saying."

The artist must have experienced a rude shock at such words, being wont to move in that atmosphere of sympathy in which people made none but the most mellifluous remarks to each other. Indeed, he himself had an innate courtliness and charm, which brought him the reputation for always saying the right thing at the right moment.

Very different was that of James McNeill Whistler. *He* made himself famous for saying the *wrong* thing at the right moment. By his friends this would be looked on as witticism; by those who were the reverse—and these were not a few—as rudeness. Inwardly he seemed to take a fiendish delight in upsetting every one. An outward and visible sign of this penchant survives in his essay on "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies."

Realizing that the cultivation of a few well-marked eccentricities often hastened the tedious and drawn-out

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process of "making a name," he set himself to acquiring a choice little collection. Of these the three principal features were the featherlike lock of hair, carefully trained into the necessary prominence, the staff which was substituted for the more usual walking-stick of modern civilization, and the utterance of more or less grotesque remarks in a strange, exaggerated Yankee dialect of his own.

One of his sayings made so lasting an impression on the public as to establish the unalterable precedent that no man should dare to make even a passing allusion to his name without "dragging in Velasquez." Not only this, but the story was soon consigned to what might be termed "The Anecdotal Stock-pot." It was constantly being dished up again in all manner of strange disguises. One of the variants of this *Ego et rex meus* chestnut, which may be taken as typical of all, recounts how an admirer on bended knee cried out to a much be-puffed and be-paragraphed writer of the present day, "Oh, mighty master ! Of all the world's great novelists, you and Charles Dickens are by far the greatest." The literary light was naturally made to answer, "Why drag in Dickens ?"

An amusing tale used to be told of Whistler concerning an adventure which he met with during a jaunt in the country. He was standing in the middle of a field, gazing abstractedly at the surrounding scenery. Suddenly the picture of still life which lay before his eyes was interrupted by signs of movement. Something was approaching from the distance. Could he never get away from hero-worship ? Was he not even free from his admirers in these remote wilds ? Could the cloak

of greatness never be thrown off? Could not a world-wide celebrity sink to the common level of ordinary human beings even for a moment? During these or similar thoughts, the unknown object approached and grew ever larger, "swelling visibly," as do little boys during the holidays. The painter was quickly brought to earth by the discovery that it was a bull. Moreover, so far from bestowing a lack of admiration, it had a very different expression gleaming in its eye. The human being thought he would saunter off in another direction. The dumb animal bestowed on him the not altogether appreciated compliment of wishing to "follow in his footsteps." Soon the man thought he might take a little running exercise. The identical idea occurred to his *vis-à-vis*. A moment later Whistler began to feel the vigour of earlier years returning to his limbs. The hot blood of youth coursed through his veins. Why should he not give way to this boyish ardour, and indulge in the now rare luxury of a short, sharp sprint to yonder gate? Full of the new idea, he set off at top speed. Nor was his would-be companion slow in taking up the challenge. It began to gain. He, in his wild career, threw down his hat and other impedimenta. Unhappily, he was not dealing with Atalanta. The animal did not stop to pick up the apple, but merely trod on it and held on its course. In the very nick of time the unwilling sprinter reached the gate and "saved his bacon" in an unpleasantly literal sense of the phrase. With a magnificent display of athleticism, he bounded over into the arms of the farmer, and turned round to find the infuriated creature glaring at him from the other side. "How dare your bull chase me?" he demanded of the

countryman. "Do you know who I am?" "Noa, I doan't." "I'm Whistler!" "Why didn't 'ee tell that to the bull, meaister?"

Some of Whistler's best-known work was the decoration of the famous "Peacock Room." The commission was executed at the request of Frederick Leyland, who possessed both artistic taste and the means to gratify it.

Mr. Leyland's daughter Florence became the wife of Val Prinsep, the late Academician. The son of Henry Thoby Prinsep, a distinguished member of the India Council, who was also something of a *littérateur*, and had written a history of that country as it was under the Marquis of Hastings, Val Prinsep inherited from him a fondness for literary pursuits. To this he gave vent in the publication of an Artists' Journal, "Virginia," a novel, and "Abibal, the Tsaurian," as well as two plays produced at the St. James's and Court Theatres. Born in Calcutta, he was naturally tempted to commit to canvas studies of the land with which his family had been so closely connected. An excellent opportunity came for doing so. When King Edward went to India as the Prince of Wales, Prinsep accompanied him, and painted a number of Indian pictures, the most important being the "Declaration of Queen Victoria as Empress."

Delighting in a free, open-air life, he spent a good deal of time at "Santa Claus," his country place at Pevensey. When in town in the summer season, he was often in evidence at Lord's when important matches were being played. Several times a chance meeting there resulted in my being carried off, a willing captive, to tea and to cricket "shop." On these occasions he was always careful to choose a table from which at

any rate an occasional glimpse of the field could be obtained.

London knew few more delightful hosts than the Prinseps, or more beautiful houses than theirs. On every side were abundant signs of their exquisite taste. Not only had they brought together a choice collection of antiques, but in the colour scheme and general arrangement of the reception-rooms a fine artistic feeling was displayed. Nothing could be more delightful than the luncheon parties which they used to give. At one of these, to which we were invited, the guests included their intimate friends the Chevalier Albanesi, famed in the musical world, and his wife, whose writings are so well known to that omnivorous company, "Novel Readers, Unlimited." After lunch there was some music, for Mrs. Prinsep is herself an accomplished pianist, and during the afternoon Luke Fildes came in from his home round the corner in Melbury Road.

Among the many interesting people who were to be met at their house was Augustus Hare. A man who had travelled much in Europe, and had written books on Italy and Sicily, France, Spain, Russia, Holland, and Scandinavia—one, moreover, who delighted in painting, and had devoted much time to the study of archæology,—it may well be imagined what a delight it was to converse with him.

As a critic of Art, Prinsep had the reputation of being hard to please. Leighton used to recount an instance of this. The President had been at work on the modelling of a statuette, "An Athlete struggling with a Python." Being satisfied with the effect produced, he showed it to several friends. As it met with



Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

Val Rumer

their fullest approval, he decided to make a life-size reproduction, the magnificent group now at the Tate Gallery being the result.

Having met with such unanimity among other artists, he determined, greatly daring, to show it to Prinsep. The stern critic gazed at it for some minutes, unable apparently to find objection to the work. Sir Frederick, seeing that he had made a favourable impression on the redoubtable Val, awaited with no small feeling of confidence the result of his friend's contemplation. The moments passed by, and the silence began to grow ominous. At last the verdict came, "Well, the snake's wrong, anyway."

Before he resided in Holland Park, Prinsep had some artist friends, Mr. and Mrs. Z——, who were near neighbours. The wife was somewhat short of stature, and her little sparring matches with the giant Val resembled the conflicts between David and Goliath. Like the latter gentleman, Prinsep did not have things entirely his own way, and on two occasions at least had the worst of it. One day he annoyed Mrs. Z—— about something, and aroused in her breast the spirit of revenge. Obviously a direct frontal attack was unlikely to avail against an aggressor who towered so far above her. She therefore sought for some "slimmer" method of defeating him. Distracting her opponent's attention for a moment, she executed a flanking movement, seized his hat, and popped it into the stove. By the time he realized what had happened, it was too late. His line of communication had been cut, the hat subjected to a heavy fire and annihilated before he was able to bring up a relieving force.

Shortly after this Mrs. Z—— was at work in her studio, feeling very worried over a picture which was not “coming” well. Noiselessly the enemy stole into the room, proud in the possession of a brand-new hat, bought to replace that which had been so cruelly cut off in the innocent beauty of its youth. Seeing that he had been unobserved, he tiptoed towards his prey and triumphantly jammed his hat well down over her head. Mrs. Z—— tore the bowler from her brow, and hurled it furiously through the open window into the muddy world beyond. Poor Prinsep at once realized that, if his head-gear was ever to be worn again, it must be speedily rescued from so precarious a position. With a cry of horror he rushed out bareheaded into the street an unwilling precursor of the Hatless Brigade, and picked his way through the mud towards the wished-for goal. During this proceeding he was followed by an incessant volley of chaff from the victor. Had a cart come up the road, there can be little doubt that, like the Roman ladies of old, she would have held down her thumb and condemned the unoffending hat to instant death. As if Prinsep had not already suffered sufficiently, his cup of sorrow was filled to the brim by the appearance of a spectator, in the person of S. J. Solomon.

Among Prinsep’s friends was that master of obscure thought and language, Robert Browning. Whatever he wrote had, no doubt, *some* inner meaning, carefully hidden from the vulgar eye. To most people, however, it was too often wrapped in mystery. The delightful grandam in “Lady Windermere’s Fan” used to be exercised in her mind as to whether the fogs made the dull people, or the dull people made the fogs. Had

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Browning been asked which alternative he favoured in connexion with his writings, he would have decided, without hesitation, that it was the dullness of the readers which made the foggiess of his poetry.

Elizabeth Robins, the well-known novelist and interpreter of Ibsen's plays, is, or was, very devoted to the writings of Robert Browning. Geneviève Ward, the great tragedienne, does not understand them, and does not for a moment pretend to do so. They are with her emphatically a *bête noire*. Miss Robins once came to stay with Miss Ward. The visit resulted in a dramatic episode which, to alter the title of a well-known book, might be styled, "Some Commotions and a Moral."

Time, 3 p.m. upon a hot summer's day. When the curtain rises, so to speak, the authoress is discovered in a comfortable hammock and a somnolent condition. She fans herself, and feebly wonders whether to get up and go indoors for a book, or indulge in the more attractive alternative of a snooze *sub rosa*. For some minutes the pros and cons of the case are turned over in her mind. In the midst of this her hostess enters, a pile of literature in her arms, and makes an alluring offer. "Shall I read to you?" The "Open Question" is solved most pleasantly. With a nod of grateful assent she lies back, while the new-comer hides herself behind a newspaper and begins to unfold its contents. After some minutes the voice ceases. There is a sound of surreptitious movement behind the paper, and then, "Oh, my dear, *do* just listen to this!" This proves to be the preface for the reading of some forty lines of poetry. At last there is a pause, and a quiet laugh. "Now what on

earth do they mean by all that?" To this a sleepy reply floats across from the hammock, "Really, I haven't the slightest idea. Why did you rouse me to hear such utter nonsense?" "Utter nonsense?" answers Miss Ward. "Quite right, my dear, I'm so glad to hear that you agree with me. *That* was some of your favourite poet, Browning."

On occasions Browning would descend from his more lofty association with the Muse of Poetry to carry on a light flirtation with her poor but amusing relation, Miss Nonsense-Rhyme from Limerick. One day he was calling on Val Prinsep, and found him laid up with lumbago. The invalid, in fun, offered his visitor a wreath, which formed part of the floral decorations of the room. The poet received it with deep obeisance, and with the words, "By this tribute you are appointing me your laureate," delivered himself of the following spontaneous poem:—

There was a young man with lumbago :
They fed him on gruel and sago.
He said "I'd as lief
That you gave me roast beef,
If you don't, to the devil you *may* go."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet painter, was another who enjoyed the making of Limericks. Prinsep also formed the subject of one of these. It commenced with the usual formula—

There was a young fellow named Val,
and concluded with two lines, the last of which was distinctly Rossettian in its alliteration—

And a head like a broom
Was the gift that God gave unto Val.

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Another of these rhymes concerned Burges, a man full of strange whims and fancies, which he enjoyed any opportunity of displaying. In his home there were many instances of this, such as the placing of long mirrors in the dark parts of passages, where there was a sharp turn. The effect produced was that of seeming suddenly to meet one's own ghost. The idea was perhaps suggested by Edgar Allan Poe's story of "William Watson." Again, in a house of his designing, the text was carved above the fireplace, "There's no place like Home." In this the capital "H" of the last word was carved out of the perpendicular, and tilted downwards. By this means he sought to imply that the "H" was dropped. These few words of explanation are necessary to give point to the following effusion :—

There is an old fellow named Burges :

From childhood he seldom emerges.

If you were not told,

He's *disgracefully* old,

You might offer bullseyes to Burges.

Dulce est decipere in loco. 'Tis sweet to play the fool at the proper time. Other famous men besides poets have liked sometimes to shake off the more serious side of their art. Tschaikowski enjoyed the joke of his "Miniature Overture to the Casse Noisette Suite," in which the music constantly worked up towards climaxes and broad effects which never came. Gounod amused himself with the ever-popular "Funeral March of a Marionette." "Papa" Haydn, though not without a tinge of sadness at the occasion which prompted the composition, did much the same in his "Farewell Symphony." Here one by one the entire orchestra gradually

finished their parts, blew out the candle at their desk, and departed, until at last only the first violin remained at his post to play the closing bars.

Gustave Doré got over most of his fun at an early age. Certainly there was not much humour apparent in his choice of subjects as a Painter. During boyhood he was very mischievous—or “mischeevious,” as the garrulous charwoman calls it. Eventually he was expelled from school for a villainous trick played upon the head-master. What must young Doré do upon one of the half-holidays, but gather together a number of frogs from a neighbouring marsh and place them in the poor old gentleman’s bed. When the wretched man retired at a late hour, he nearly had a fit as his feet came into contact with the colony which had invaded such sacred territory. “Brekekekex! koax, koax!” ejaculated the frogs at this stranger stealing into their midst, being thoroughly acquainted with their Aristophanes. To the greeting the pedagogue replied in fitting language, and next day the culprit left the school.

The above story seems strangely incongruous in one who afterwards made so great a name as a painter of religious subjects, such as “Christ leaving the Prætorium” and the Entry into Jerusalem. In his book illustrations he was no less successful than in his pictures, first making his mark by illustrating Rabelais, and “The Wandering Jew.” These were followed by Dante’s “Inferno,” “Purgatorio and Paradiso,” “Don Quixote,” “The Bible,” “Paradise Lost,” Tennyson’s “Idylls of the King,” and others. Altogether, he is said to have earned between 1850 and 1870 no less a sum than £280,000 by his pencil.

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Burne-Jones used to amuse himself by drawing caricatures of various well-known ladies, depicted "mit nodings on." He would choose particularly those who were famous more for their fortunes than for their faces, and whose figure made up in quantity what it lacked in quality. When these terrible drawings were finished, they would be labelled "Mrs. So-and-so, as she would have appeared in the Garden of Eden."

The mention of them calls to mind the stir made at the Royal Academy Art Schools at one time upon the question of making studies from what George Du Maurier termed "The Altogether."

Some people thought that in the cause of Art the models, when being sketched from the nude, should appear "wrapped in thought"—"only this and nothing more," as the Raven has it. Others, again, did not consider it proper, and asserted that studies should only be made from the *semi*-nude. After considerable discussion the matter was finally referred to the President, Sir Frederick Leighton. The judgment pronounced by him was this: "Studies may be made from the nude—with reservations." Truly the answer of a diplomat. In accordance with this decree, the models appeared during "business hours" swathed in drapery of attenuated dimensions. The Academy students were quick in taking up the joke, and for some time afterwards continued to refer to the diminutive covering as "the Reservations."

While this excitement was at its height, a new student arrived at the Art Schools from Scotland—whence come the oatcakes and the "unco' guid." When Mac proceeded to make sketches from the *tout ensemble*

with the rest, his fellow artists at once began to make fun of him. What would his "unspeakable" Scotch friends say, if they learned that he was doing such a thing? With his scruples he must not *think* of it! In spite, however, of all this chaff, the new-comer continued in the path of unrighteousness.

One day the canny Scotsman, having been teased rather more than usual, vouchsafed an explanation. "Weel, ye must ken, I had at furrst some wee scruples about it, mysel'. So I thocht I'd best gang tae the elders of the Kirk for advice. After grave discussion they gave me tae understan' that I might do it wi'oot ony harrm, sae lang as I kept in my Heart the Peace of God."

There are none so deaf as they that will not hear. Grievous to relate, therefore, one of his audience pretended to have misunderstood his last words, and replied with more humour than reverence, "I beg your pardon. Did I understand you to say that you always used a Piece of Cod in your Art? I suppose you mean Cod-Liver for your Oil-paintings. I've never tried it myself."

The answer puts one in mind of the astonishing utterance once made by Rev. Spooner, the Warden of New College, Oxford, who raised to himself "a monument more lasting than brass," by reason of the fact that the term "Spoonerism," the interchanging of the first letters or syllables of two words in a sentence, was named after him. During one of his sermons he is reported to have made the touching observation, "Is there any one among us who has not at some time cherished a *Half-Warmed Fish* in his breast?" The reverend gentleman had intended to say "Half-Formed Wish."

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This is but one of the many stories told of him. Has not his fame gone forth to the uttermost parts of the earth? Only consider his "Cinquering Kongs their titles take" and "Iceland's Greasy Mountains," given out as the titles of two well-known hymns. Are they not emendations worthy to excite the bitterest rivalry and jealousy in the breasts of the leading scholars of the day? Nor is this all. In his way he is quite a naturalist, taking in incidents, which others might pass by unnoticed. On one occasion he was walking through the Parks and a Fat Belle on his arm, which is his picturesque way of saying that a Bat Fell on it. He is, moreover, quite a ladies' man, and has been heard to confess, in speaking of the fair sex who reside at Oxford, that, if ever he has to give up living at the 'Varsity, he will Kiss them Meanly.

Poor Dr. Spooner! Did he ever perpetrate a tenth or even a hundredth part of the so-called Spoonerisms which have been fathered upon him? Probably he once made some slip in his speech at a lecture or some other more or less public appearance, and thereby established a precedent of which the undergraduates were not slow in taking advantage. The only time the writer held conversation with him was during the viva voce portion of the Divinity Examinations at Oxford; "Divinners" they were always called colloquially. Certainly on that occasion his speech was as above suspicion as Cæsar's wife.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ACADEMY

AT Burlington House there take place annually two functions of special interest, the Private View and the Soirée.

At the first of these it is etiquette that no exhibitors shall be present, save only a few of the most important. In any case, those who attend are not expected to take up a prominent position before their *chef d'œuvre*, and say, in a loud commanding voice, "Yes, that's a little thing I knocked off last autumn. I'm so glad you like it. My friends tell me it will be the picture of the year." Besides, even supposing the artist did behave in this way, it is a great question whether it would be of much use. Society has not come for a Private View of the Academy. It has come for a private view of—*itself*. Society is a philosopher, and realizes that "the proper study of mankind is Man," only, being up-to-date, it has amended the statement. Nowadays, the proper study of mankind is Woman, and of woman—*Dress*. The latter engrossing investigation has resulted in the fair sex evolving a very beautiful paradox, which apparently governs the designing of evening apparel: "To be smartly dressed, one must be fashionably undressed." The costume is, in fact, a bare necessity.

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There is a story of a certain explorer, who had spent several years far beyond the haunts of civilization. When he returned home, he was inundated with invitations. The Mrs. Leo Hunters descended upon him from all sides, fighting with each other to secure him for their entertainments. The great man explored all his boxes, and at last made one of his most important discoveries—the dress suit, which had been discarded for so long a period. At the first evening reception, which he attended, he looked about him in horrified amazement. Being of a modest disposition, he was soon “covered with blushes as to the face,” as the Latin authors put it. Turning round, he caught the eye of some one whom he remembered having met in years gone by. She at once smiled, and held out her hand. “A friend told me who you were. How you have altered! Do you know, I shouldn’t have known you from Adam.” He glanced at her dress, which was in the very height, or perhaps one should rather say the very *depth* of fashion. “And I, dear lady, should hardly have known *you* from Eve.”

The Academy Private View prepares the way for the regular crushes of the ensuing weeks.

For those who are favoured with the friendship of the great ones in the world of painting, its pleasures may be enhanced by tea at the Arts Club afterwards.

During the week, which follows the function, the conversation is much the same wherever one goes. “How do? Were you at the Private View? So was I. Oh yes, *everybody* was there. Mr. Alexander looked—well, he was simply—What did you say? The pictures? Oh, *not nearly as good as usual!*”

Apparently, the Academy never *is* as good as usual. It never *was* as good as usual, even at the first exhibition ever held. What the "usual" *is*, with which it is always so unfavourably compared, is a little difficult to explain. However, the remark satisfies Society, which is the great thing.

At the end of the season comes the Academy Soirée. "Every one" is there as before, save that the representatives of Stageland are unable to arrive from their professional labours until close on midnight. At the top of the grand staircase stands the President to welcome the guests, with a smile for all, and a shake of the hand for those whom he knows personally. For many years, of course, Sir Frederick Leighton occupied the honoured position of P.R.A.

After his death, the mantle fell on bluff, good-natured Sir John Millais, a typical, genial John Bull. His reign was brief, for the Pre-Raphaelite painter only lived some six months to enjoy his well-deserved honour. The following year saw the election of Sir Edward Poynter.

There is one special difference between the Private View and the Soirée. Invitations to the latter are issued to all those who are represented by oil painting or water colour, statue or enamel, miniature or "black and white."

The R.A.'s and Associates, as they move solemnly among the "Who's Whos" and the Leaders of Fashion, put one in mind of schoolmasters among naughty little boys. Society is chattering away of "the days that are gone," or speaks of the near future. Suddenly an R.A. approaches. Society spots him, and with a mental cry

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of "Cave!" at once begins talking of the Academy. In a loud tone it expresses the deliberate opinion that the exhibition is "*far better than usual*," and that the school-master has positively surpassed himself in his artistic efforts.

In addition to those in authority, there are the lesser lights, and those lucky students, who have their first picture hung. The last-named arrive at the soirée filled with excitement and lemonade, or, if they have already begun to make their pile, weak claret-cup. Full of animation they rush from room to room, discussing art in all its phases, and holding forth upon its hopes and fears to every kindred spirit whom they meet. For all the world they are like the "four-and-twenty little boys," who bounded out of school. Then, with brooding melancholy on their brows, approach the architects. Through the past months they have been busy trying to find the Architectural Room, but without success. This is their last chance. Their careworn look seems to betoken a hidden belief that the place in question is a myth, which might be relegated to the same category as the frumious Bandersnatch and the Jabberwock.

Lastly, there always turn up a few individuals who can be termed neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring. They are certainly not Painters, Patrons of Art, or Leaders of Fashion, neither can they be counted among those Who are Who. No one knows how they got in. No one cares how soon they get out. They usually know a few celebrities present, and pester their lives out. These latter are, at first, so astounded at the appearance of the Unknowns in such surroundings, that they can do nothing. Their limbs seem to lose all

power. They are rooted to the spot, and once they are in the toils of the hunter, all enjoyment is over for the evening.

One of the buccaneers—the Unknowns, that is to say—made herself particularly dreaded. She was a poetess, a very, very minor one, and had a certain small—not “following,” but the opposite—a certain small body of people, whom *she followed*. When she espied any one whom she knew slightly, she would stalk them from behind: thus they found themselves in her power, before they had had time to make whatever excuse is the out-door equivalent to the ever-useful white lie, “Not-at-Home.” Having caught her prey, she did not wait for any of that genteel English pre-ambuling discussion of the weather. Oh, no! she jumped at once *in medias res*, and said, more or less, “How d’you do? Let us talk of ourselves. First let it be of Myself. When we’ve exhausted that absorbing topic, we will speak of Yourself, though I doubt whether there will be time.” She was quite right; there never *was* time. Every sentence she uttered began with “I.” Each fourth word was also “I,” unless it was “me.” On the rare occasions when it was neither of these, it was “my.” Amongst those with whom she had scraped an acquaintance she was known as Magda, in allusion to that lady’s penchant for pointing out, “Io son io.” When she had effected a capture, she stood beside the unfortunate prisoner during the entire evening, and spoke of herself, pausing ever and anon to say, “Who was that nodding to you? Oh, is it So-and-so? I *should* like to know him. He’s so brilliant, that I’m sure we should get on together splendidly. Do introduce me.

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I always enjoy the Academy Soirée ; it's so nice for *all us celebrities* to meet each other." The climax came when she looked round at some of the paintings—in itself a very bourgeois thing to do on such an occasion. Then she opened a catalogue, which had been carefully borrowed previously. "Oh, look ! That's a picture by Henrietta Rae. You know she painted 'Psitch before the Throne of Venus.'" Shakespeare tells us that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. Certainly Psyche did not seem as sweet when pronounced Psitch. As luck would have it, the artist in question came into the room and smiled across. This, of course, brought the inevitable question from Magda, "Oh, do you know her, Madame Sterling ? Do introduce me."

Henrietta Rae may well be considered one of the foremost lady artists : indeed, she has received a special mark of distinction, which is shared by no other woman. Some four years ago she was commissioned to execute a fresco for the Royal Exchange. Previously, the honour had been confined to men alone, one or more panels by leading painters being added each year. This will continue to be done, until the full number necessary for the scheme of decoration shall have been completed. The first of the famous series of frescoes was carried out by the late Lord Leighton, while Seymour Lucas and other well-known men have been responsible for others. The subject chosen by Henrietta Rae out of the list submitted was "Sir Richard Whittington and his charities." To carry out the work on the prescribed scale (some eighteen feet high by six wide) was no mean task. When, at the same time, her husband, Ernest Normand, received a similar commission for "King John sealing

the Magna Charta," the prospect became distinctly alarming. Luckily, they had a particularly large double studio in the grounds of their home at Norwood. Here a massive wooden frame was built up at either end to support on pulleys their two canvases.

To execute a picture eighteen feet in height is not the easiest thing in the world. There seemed only one way of accomplishing it : that was, to dig a deep hole and lower the bottom of the picture into the ground, till the top was brought down to the requisite place. This they accordingly did, and sent for a real live grave-digger to excavate two pits some nine feet deep. It was most uninspiring to watch the process. From the plays of Shakespeare one had always been led to believe that grave-diggers were fellows of infinite jest, who asked each other gruesome conundrums, and discoursed of dead bodies in the most lively manner. This one was a regular fraud. He threw no skulls or bones out on the studio floor during his work, and didn't ask a single riddle. In fact, he was most disappointing.

Henrietta Rae has a wonderful fund of anecdotes and memories of Leighton, Val Prinsep, and other artist friends. One of the most amusing concerns herself. It is an episode of Travel and Adventure. The Travel in question was a journey, which took place between Victoria Station and the Crystal Palace. Mr. and Mrs. Normand were travelling up from Norwood to spend the day in town. As they had to go on separate visits, each kept their own return ticket, lest one of them should by any chance miss the train, by which they had decided to return. As they were steaming into the terminus, Henrietta Rae chanced to be holding the

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return half in her hand, together with a piece of silver chocolate paper. Before the platform was reached, she opened the carriage window, and, without thinking what she was doing, threw out, not the chocolate paper, but—the ticket. Ernest Normand smiled at the mistake, and playfully chaffed his wife about it. Then after a certain amount of teasing the matter was dismissed from their minds.

At the end of the day they duly met at the station for the journey home. Mrs. Normand told the story of her woe and even showed the piece of chocolate paper to the collector. He listened with attention, and finally arranged that everything should be made right without a second payment. Suddenly all was upset by her husband, who, during her conversation with the collector, “might have been observed” (as the yellow-backs say) searching his pockets one after the other for something, which did not appear to be forthcoming. “Really, it’s very absurd, but—er—the fact is—inspector—er, I—h’m—well, I’ve lost *my* return ticket as well!” An inspector is well drilled in the art of politeness. “Quite so, sir! Of course you have something to corroborate your statement—a bag of buns—or an orange.”

Truth is stranger than fiction, and there are probably few who have not met with experiences and coincidences, which seem incredible. Antoinette Sterling used to say that she did not care to read novels for that very reason. We encountered one of these odd coincidences in connexion with Mr. and Mrs. Normand. They had been asked to help in the arranging of the Women’s Section of pictures in the Victorian Exhibition held at

Earl's Court. When Imre Kiralfy sent them an invitation to the opening ceremony, he enclosed four reserved seats for the performance in the Great Hall. Two of these they very kindly sent on, saying that they were themselves going down early in the morning in time for the opening, but would be sitting next us at the show, so that we had better not try to meet till then. After lunch we set off for the Exhibition, took the train, arrived at one of the numerous entrances, and were at once swallowed up in the crowds fighting their way towards the gates. Abandoning ourselves, without resistance, to the tossing waves of humanity, we were eventually whirled by an eddy towards one of the turnstiles, and after considerable difficulty managed to pass in. The couple, who had gone through directly ahead of us, turned round at this moment. To our intense surprise they proved to be our host and hostess, who for some reason had been prevented from getting down when they had intended. If one were to calculate the chances against such a meeting, and to take into consideration the number of entrances, of turnstiles at each, the thousands and thousands who came to the Exhibition during the opening day, and the likelihood of our arriving by different trains from different localities at precisely the same moment, the odds against the event would mount up to a remarkably big figure.

The Exhibition was naturally attended by numbers of eminent artists, and in strolling round afterwards we stopped to chat with several, among others poor Phil May, John MacWhirter, and David Murray. When the latter was elected an Academician, the news reached him while away in the country. The telegram came

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in the middle of dinner, and the company drank his health with much delight. After some joking, one of the guests remarked, "Now, of course, you'll have to get married." "Get married?" answered the new R.A., in his broad Scotch. "Na, na! Did ye no ken I was 'Murray-ed' when I was born?" After such a pun the company came very near wiring to the committee to get his election declared null and void.

Henrietta Rae was a great friend of Lord Leighton. He always took the keenest interest in her work from the very commencement of her career, and helped her greatly with advice and encouragement. When she was at work on her picture of "Ophelia," in which the King and Queen were depicted as being seated on a settle, while Ophelia was entering the hall, Val Prinsep, who was a close neighbour, used to drop in regularly each morning and make fresh criticisms on her treatment of the picture. He would suggest posing the head of the King differently nearly every day. Being herself never quite satisfied with the effect, she altered the position accordingly, feeling dreadfully worried and disheartened the while. At last, one morning, Leighton came over to the studio and inspected the very latest change. He at once put a stop to the alterations, which might otherwise have continued for an indefinite period. "Why do you keep altering the picture? The only place you *haven't* had his head is on the floor. It won't do. Pose it as *you* wish, and then keep it so."

Trying as must have been these suggestions of Prinsep, they were as nothing to the havoc which, for a joke, Sir William Richmond once wrought upon one of Mrs. Normand's pictures. Coming into the studio

one morning, he found her at work on a study of a head. "I'm just trying to see whether anything can be done with a little idea that came to me yesterday. What do you think of it?" Richmond gazed at it for a few moments. "I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's make it an old master." With this he seized a brush and some brown paint, and applied himself to the task in silence. The colouring grew darker and darker under his assiduous attentions, until with a final daub he removed the sole remaining suggestion of form. "There you are; it's a regular Van Dyck. It only wants restoring now."

Among other good stories of studio life, which Mrs. Normand tells, is one about a model who used to sit for some of the female figures in her pictures. The artist was suffering one day from a terrible cold in the head. Among other unpleasant effects, this had caused severe inflammation in her eyes. In spite of this she struggled bravely to get through her work. The model absolutely refused to display the slightest signs of commiseration. During the sitting, the post arrived: with it there came a magazine containing an interview with her. The model took it up during an interval for rest, and began to read aloud, pausing ever and anon to criticize the matter contained therein. After giving a description of Henrietta Rae's early training and of her successes in the world of painting, the article passed on to her personal appearance. One of the sentences spoke of her eyes as being like velvet. The statement left an opening for a crushing remark, which the model found herself quite unable to resist. "They're jolly well *red* velvet, then." After this, the frivolous

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young person laid the literature down with a delighted twinkle in her eyes, and at a sign from the painter prepared to continue the sitting.

The mention of female models recalls an anecdote told concerning an artist, who shall be named David, and a girl possessing a frolicsome disposition, which perpetually prompted her to be up to fresh larks.

On arriving at the studio, it was David's custom to take off his boots and work in slippers during the day, for it is extremely tiring for a painter to stand up hour after hour at his easel, with sometimes hardly a moment's respite.

One afternoon David went out to see a friend, who was at work a few doors off. During his absence the unruly model, lest she should die of sheer "ennuie," looked round in search of possible amusement. The devil can generally be trusted to find some mischief still for idle hands to do, nor was he backward in coming forward on *this* occasion. The door of the provision cupboard was half open, and a pot of strawberry jam peeped wickedly out. An inspiration soon came. The "practical jokeress" seized the jar from its resting-place, and quickly emptied the contents into David's boots. She then returned it to its former resting-place, closed the door after it with great politeness, and sat down by the fire to await the wanderer's return. On coming back, he worked on for a time, after which he said that he had finished with her for the day. As she went out, she gave him a roguish look, the full significance of which he did not at the time quite grasp. Then he put away his things and prepared for departure. He went over to the corner where his boots were kept, and

began to slip them on, when—but let us draw a veil over “the wingèd words which he spake” during the ensuing moments. David’s feet were, like his heart, very tender, and he saw that he would never be able to get them in until every bit of the jam had been removed. Had he been a French scholar, he could have called for “the boots of the gardener’s aunt.” It was one of the very few occasions when that singular piece of fashionable Parisian conversation, as given in the exercise books, might have come in useful. As it was, there was nothing for it but that he should raise them up tenderly and struggle with water and hope to cleanse them of their sticky contents. While he was in the midst of this occupation the door opened, and in marched a fellow artist.

It is not always the case that the young model spends her time in playing tricks. Felix Moscheles, the artist, whose father was a godson of Felix Mendelssohn, made very excellent use of his, for at one of the parties, which he and his delightful wife gave at Elm Park Road, they arranged for the model to appear, dressed in the Japanese costume in which she had been painted that spring, and perform some very beautiful dances, to entertain the guests who were assembled in his studio. In one corner of the room stood the picture itself, so that one could compare it with the original.

The use of models has its drawbacks. G. F. Watts practically abandoned them altogether in later years when engaged on his wonderful mystic pictures. He seemed, however, sometimes uncertain whether such a step had been a wise one. A bad workman, it is said,

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complains of his tools; but the good workman can obtain good results even with bad tools. In the case of a really great master of his art, not only does he do this, but, if he has not the necessary tools, he can make an efficient substitute from the simplest means. With it he often gets a result far superior to that of a less brilliant confrère. So Watts in obtaining his effects was not tied down to using a proper paint-brush. In point of fact, a young artist, who begged for a few hints, was practically given this advice: "Paint with anything rather than a brush. If you must use one, try the *wrong* end, and I dare say you'll come to the conclusion that it's the *right* one after all." He himself painted one of his pictures without using any brush whatever, and applied the paint to the canvas by means of the little ivory stick used to mix the colours.

I remember going with my mother to call on him one day. After seeing the studio, we were taken out to view the enormous statue "Physical Energy," upon which he had been at work for so many years, and which he was at that time bringing to final completion. It was standing in a large shed opening into the garden, and towered high above one's head, mounted upon a truck, so that on warm days it might be wheeled along the railway lines, on which it rested, into the open. In speaking with the veteran painter one felt instinctively that, though he was in the world, he was not *of* it. There was a greatness in his nature which lifted him far above all the petty jealousies and pin-prick troubles of those around. There seemed an old-world dignity, nobility, and courtesy, in every word and action, which conjured up visions of Venice in the days of its grandeur, its

doges and palaces, its potent, grave, and reverend signiors. No wonder that his thoughts were never of earthly prosperity or the mere accumulation of wealth. No wonder that twice he refused a baronetcy, saying that a title would not make him any the better painter. No wonder that, though he has passed away, his work will be revered through the centuries to come. And his name, will it not be set down in the pages of history among that band of distinguished men, whose portraits he himself chose to paint—Tennyson, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Cardinal Manning, Browning, Lord Lytton, William Morris, John Stuart Mill, and the rest—as having contributed towards making the Victorian era pre-eminent in the annals of the English nation?

A few doors from the house which used to be occupied by him there lives another great artist, Holman Hunt. In the early days he used to share a studio with Rossetti, and was associated with him and Millais in founding the so-called Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. To spend an afternoon at his house is to enjoy a privilege, the memory of which one must always treasure. During conversation one Sunday, about the time when the Russo-Japanese War was at its height, he spoke of the terrible scenes of revolt and bloodshed which were taking place in St. Petersburg and the whole country generally, and recalled how he had already seen two royal personages turn to England as a refuge, adding that he would not be very surprised, if some day a third were added to the number. This brought up other interesting memories of years gone by, for Holman Hunt is close on his eightieth birthday, while it is sixty years since his first picture was exhibited on the walls of the

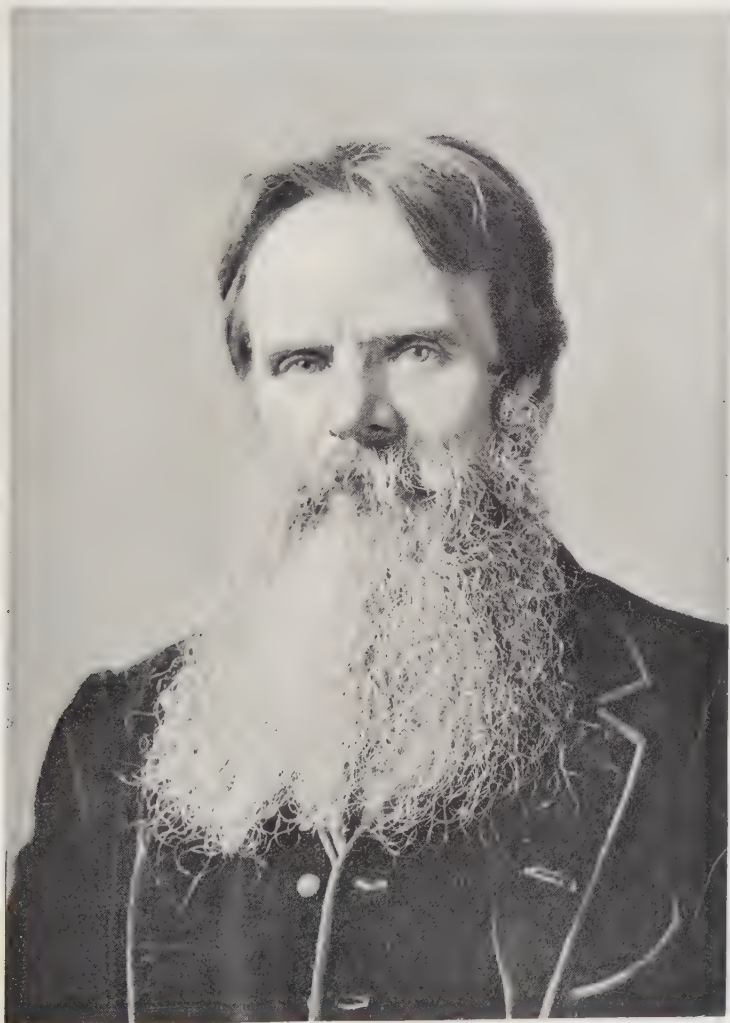


Photo by Elliott and Fry, Baker Street, London, W.

W. Holman Hunt

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Academy. The mention of this fact brought up the name of Manuel Garcia (who was in a few days to celebrate his centenary), and the painter displayed the keenest interest, asking many questions as to his appearance and mode of life at such an age. Thence we passed to the subject of spiritualism, and he recalled how Sir William Crookes had started out to investigate the subject as an unbeliever and ended by himself becoming a convert to the theory, finding so much which was inexplicable upon any other assumption. After this Mr. Hunt went on to speak of Ford Madox Brown, the historical painter, whose most important works were "Cordelia and Lear," "Christ washing Peter's feet," and the twelve frescoes for the Manchester Town Hall. He said that the artist in question had at one time interested himself in spiritualism, and passed through many strange experiences, culminating in an extraordinary sitting at Lord Mount Temple's house, when Mrs. Guppy, a well-known medium of that time, made her appearance under the most bewildering circumstances. It was too much for Madox Brown. He found his belief in everything so shaken by what he had seen that he became practically an Agnostic from that time on. This episode led to the mention of Antoinette Sterling's close friendship with the Mount Temples, and to the remembrance of how she had waked up at the hotel one night on tour to see the form of Lord Mount Temple standing before her, and next morning received a telegram announcing his death. Upon this Holman Hunt recounted the following curious story.

A ship had been at sea in a storm, and a sailor was told off by the captain to remain at the tiller and to

leave it on no consideration, until some one was sent to relieve him. The storm grew worse ; the waves rolled higher and higher ; the lightning flashed and thunder pealed as though the heavens were breaking asunder. Suddenly the youth came running along the deck, looking strangely frightened. The captain asked in a stern voice why he had left his post, and was met with the answer that his father had suddenly appeared and told him to leave, as he would himself look after the steering. The captain replied that he must have been dreaming, considering that his father, though generally a member of the crew, had not come on board upon that voyage, being left at home, too ill to move. Taking out his watch he carefully noted the time, as did the others on deck, who had heard what was said. On returning to shore they were met with the news that the sailor's father had died suddenly. Further questions were asked, and it was discovered that the appearance on the ship had exactly coincided with the time at which the death had occurred. There could, he concluded, be no question as to the veracity of this, seeing that all the crew had been acquainted with the facts and verified the time of the appearance, when they were out in mid-ocean.

CHAPTER XV

THE LYCEUM THEATRE

ANTOINETTE STERLING was ever a worshipper of the drama, and was proud to claim the friendship of almost all the greatest players of her day. For many years it was her invariable custom to give her services at the Theatrical Fund Dinners. Whenever such men as George Alexander, Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Henry Irving, John Toole, Beerbohm Tree, or Sir Charles Wyndham were to take the chair at the Annual Dinner, they would at once write to request her assistance in the musical programme, and it was one of her greatest delights to give it. She always said that such a collection of men as were present on these occasions formed one of the most inspiring audiences, to whom it was possible to sing.

Among all the theatrical dinners one in particular stood out as being of peculiar interest. On 30 June, 1883, the following letter arrived from J. L. Toole :—

“DEAR MADAME STERLING,—The Committee would be so greatly obliged if you would favour them with a ballad next Wednesday evening at St. James’s Hall, the banquet given to Mr. Henry Irving. Mr. Sims Reeves and Mr. Santley are going to sing—it will be a very grand affair—and your favouring us would be greatly appreciated.”

Madame Sterling was naturally only too pleased to take part. It was the first time Sir Henry was going over to tour America, and the banquet was fixed for 4 July as a compliment to the country he was about to visit. It was a very wonderful company, which assembled to do honour to England's most famous actor. There were at least six applications for every available seat, and the list of stewards contained some of the most celebrated names in England. Lord Coleridge, the Chief Justice, was in the chair, and in an eloquent speech wished Mr. Irving God-speed. W. E. Gladstone was on the Committee, while many Cabinet Ministers and Judges helped to make up what must have been by far the most noteworthy gathering ever seen at the St. James's Hall.

A constant visitor to the theatre, the contralto was everywhere invited to visit her friends "behind," either between the acts or after the performance. A telegram would be sent off to the manager in the morning: "Greetings, and if quite convenient might I have a box to-night?" This invariably brought the reply, "With greatest pleasure." No, that statement is not quite accurate. The reply was *not* invariable. There were two exceptions. One was in the case of a new management, which was running a comedy at a certain theatre. It was well known to be a frost, but the singer was anxious to see the piece, as it was being played by an American company. The curt answer arrived, "Quite impossible, house sold out." Not even the word "regret" was inserted, though the reply-paid form would have allowed the manager to have displayed that courtesy, without being called upon to disgorge an extra halfpenny

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from his own privy purse. A friend called next day, who happened to have been at the identical piece on the previous evening. "Was it good?" "Oh, no, very feeble." "But I understand the place was packed." "Packed? What do you mean?" "Well, the house was sold out." "Sold out? Good heavens, no. What gave you that idea? There were five boxes empty, only twenty people in the stalls, and possibly three dozen in the dress circle."

The other exception was in the case of Wilson Barrett. He was playing in the "Sign of the Cross," or "The Hot Cross Bun," as it was termed by the profession in allusion to the placards, which displayed a cross with a large circle in the middle. The religious fervour must have been in the ascendant at the moment when Mr. Barrett wired his reply. The answer read, "Greetings and Blessings. Box reserved for to-night."

Antoinette Sterling had great ideas on the educational and moral value of seeing good plays and players. She always held that it did people as much good as listening to any sermon, and *more* good than listening to the majority of them. Naturally, therefore, my own theatre-going days commenced at a somewhat early period of existence. At the age of fifteen there remained hardly a London playhouse which had not been visited, and since this always meant going behind, it resulted in the inestimable privilege of being introduced to nearly all the most prominent actors of that time.

Of such remembrances perhaps the earliest is that of going to the Lyceum Theatre to see "Faust," which had been just produced with Ellen Terry as Margaret. This was at the end of 1885, and the piece ran on to the

middle of the Jubilee year. What a deep impression was made by Irving's personation of Mephistopheles and by that weird scene on the Brocken! I watched the play through eyes that nearly dropped out with excitement, a very small boy looking out from that very big box, along the front of which were fitted screens, in shape and manipulation resembling the windows in railway carriages. The *entr'actes* were spent in pulling these up and down incessantly, until my father evolved the Machiavellian scheme of putting a stop to the nuisance by sending for ices. At the end of the play we were conducted behind to a small room at the side of the stage, there to await the arrival of Miss Terry. The moments of expectation were spent in peering surreptitiously on to the stage, where the scene-shifters were rushing to and fro, busy getting confusion out of order.

In the midst of this unseemly display of curiosity, the queen of the Lyceum entered. The effect of being in the presence of her, to whose fascinations my boyish heart had at once succumbed, was absolutely overwhelming. Ellen Terry was actually there in the same room: this was the single thought which filled the mind, whence all but it had fled.

The latter phrase, by the way, recalls an amusing mistake which used to be made by one of "John Oliver Hobbes'" brothers. In the days of his youth he would stand upon a stool in the drawing-room and with solemn mien recite—

The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence Sallbutty had fled.

The piece had been learned by ear, and "*Whence all but he* had fled" sounded to him as though some person



Photo by Windore and Grove, Baker Street, London, W.

*As seen by Ellen Terry =
1905:
as "Alice Price" =*

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had fled, whose name was "Sallbutty." Either it was the captain or one of the crew—he was uncertain which.

Equally solemnly did I stand in that room, gazing with open-mouthed wonderment at the sweet lady who had appeared like some fair angel visitant. The dream was roughly broken by the matter-of-fact admonishing of my father: "Aren't you going to take off your hat and say, 'How do you do?' to Miss Terry?" And the moral? Possibly this—

'Tis said that manners oft proclaim the man;

Ill manners oft, methinks, proclaim the *boy*.

The first visit to the Lyceum Theatre was the precursor of many others, which it is to be hoped were accompanied by better manners than those displayed at that meeting with Miss Terry.

When we used to arrive at the Lyceum Theatre there would be first a few moments' greeting from Joseph Hurst, who was for so many years in command of the box office. Then, with a smile of welcome, would come forward Bram Stoker, Sir Henry's acting manager, broad-shouldered and finely built, considerably over six feet in height, with reddish beard, genial face, and Irish brogue. When one is conversing with him it is always intensely difficult to realize that he has been the author of that most blood-curdling and thrilling of modern tales, "Dracula." This by the way. Offering Madame Sterling his arm, he would do the honours for "The Chief" and escort her to that magnificent box, which was ever reserved for the use of personal friends of the management. Then he would retire, after delivering the welcome message that Sir Henry hoped to have the

pleasure of seeing her at the end of the piece. When the second act was over, there would come a knock at the door, and an attendant would enter, bearing a tray piled up with coffee, sweets, and ices, "with Sir Henry Irving's compliments." At the close of the performance, Bram Stoker would be waiting to show the way behind the scenes to the actor-manager's own room. Here a few precious moments would be spent in the presence of him to whose splendid devotion, to whose lofty ideals, to whose supremacy in the art of the actor, of the poet, and of the artist, the Stage owes to such a high degree the position which it holds to-day. Then, when ten or fifteen minutes had passed like so many seconds, he would bid us good-bye, and Bram Stoker—ever at hand—would lead us down a passage and out through Sir Henry's private entrance to the street beyond. Driving home, none would speak save in an undertone, as though unwilling to come back again to everyday existence.

The extraordinary personality of him whom we had left seemed to have borne one far away from the ordinary pettiness of daily life to some other existence, where all was romance, poetry, chivalry, and honour. There was the same sensation of awe and reverence which one felt on leaving the presence of G. F. Watts. Nor is this to be wondered at, for indeed the position was in many ways very similar, which those two noble characters held in relation to the others belonging to their respective professions.

When Antoinette Sterling went to see a play, she was, as has been remarked above, usually invited to have a chat with "her friends behind" at the end of the piece.

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Dear Kent and Frank Kinnear

Let me offer you
my sincere thankfulness
for your hearty
letter concerning our
union in aid of the
Anti-Slavery Cause.

It will be a pleasure
to all those who will help
up on this occasion
to hear and finally see
you.

2 June 1851

The meeting did not, however, invariably take place behind the scenes. The reverse happened in at least two instances. On the one occasion we had gone to see "King Henry VIII". During the last *entr'acte* Bram Stoker came in with the usual message from The Chief. The singer began telling him how much she was enjoying herself. She spoke of Sir Henry's impressive rendering of Wolsey, and of the sweetness of Miss Terry as the Queen. But, above all, she praised Forbes Robertson's supremely touching performance as Buckingham, and recalled the pathos with which, in his final scene, he had spoken those words of farewell. His acting had carried her away so completely that she somehow felt as if it had been all real, and the end had actually come. But the delusion was rudely upset. A knock was heard at this moment, the door opened, and in walked Forbes Robertson, smiling and quite recovered from the ordeal through which he had passed. He stayed in the box throughout the last act, and quickly proved that, so far from being dead, he was very much alive. So much for Buckingham.

The other exception was Mr. Tree. When the contralto used to go to the Haymarket Theatre, "Consule Beerbohm," she was always given the same box, at the back of which was a large ante-room in direct communication with the stage. Here it was the manager's custom to see his guests between the acts. The first occasion on which this happened has always remained firmly imprinted on the mind. It was during the run of "Hamlet," and there seemed something singularly incongruous in watching Ophelia rave about the stage one minute and in shaking hands with her almost the

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next in the ante-room. It came almost as a surprise to find that, in spite of the straw which still remained in her hair, her conversation was rational, and that the Prince of Denmark, standing at her side, had completely cast off his gloomy air, and, instead of indulging in lengthy soliloquies, gave vent to terse epigrams.

It is doubtful which of the two displays the greater wit in conversation. Certainly there seems no end to the *mots* which they are reported to have uttered. A typical remark of Mr. Tree was one which he made not so long ago during the performance of a special matinée of "Hamlet." It was at the time when the first news had been given to the Press that he was intending to bring out a new play upon the subject of Nero. There is a speech in the third act of "Hamlet," commencing "'Tis now the very witching hour of night," which contains these lines :—

O heart, lose not thy nature ; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom.

When he came to these words he promptly introduced a line of his own, as an aside, for the benefit of one of the company who was standing at the wings—

"Excepting when I play the part myself."

One of Mrs. Tree's most humorous remarks concerned a lady "with a past," or, to be more accurate, with several pasts. She had recently married a second time. Her name coming up in the course of conversation, some one asked who her first husband had been, and finished by saying, "I can't remember for the life of me. I know it began with an L." It was taken up by Mrs. Tree in a moment. "I should think it was—Legion !"

Another actress celebrated for her quickness of retort hit a bull's-eye when reference was made to a certain lady, who had been acting for over a quarter of a century, but still persisted in appearing in youthful rôles. One of the party made strenuous objections to her doing this. "It's absurd for her to play *ingénue* parts. How can she possibly appear simple, when she has such an evil look?" The answer came like a flash. "Evil? I should have called it *medi-evil*."

Of all Sir Henry Irving's friends none was more intimate than J. L. Toole. That first visit to "Faust" at the Lyceum was quickly followed by one to Toole's Theatre. Thus, within a few weeks of meeting England's greatest tragedian, there was added the further delight of being introduced to her leading comedian. The stories told about the old actor must be almost as numberless as the sands upon the seashore. The following two may perhaps prove less widely known than most, but it is somewhat difficult to separate the grain from the chestnut, so to speak. They have the merit of being true, which is at any rate something to their credit.

Walking along the main street of a provincial town, Toole happened to glance across the road. His eyes fell on something which apparently gave him considerable satisfaction. With a smile he crossed over to the baker's shop into which he had been gazing. Then, putting on a grave face, he entered and rapped at the counter. An old lady toddled in from the back room and asked what he required. The new-comer looked about him, coughed, and said in solemn tones, "If you please, I want two girls and a boy." The old lady stared. "I *beg* your pardon?" The request was repeated. "I want two

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girls and a boy." A moment's hesitation and then he continued, "Or, let me see, if you haven't any boy, three girls would do!" "Really, sir, I—I don't quite understand. Two girls and a boy, or three girls? I——" "Well, well; if you haven't them all in stock perhaps you will order some and I will call again." The shop-owner looked more mystified than ever. "But I haven't any boys or girls, sir. I'm a spinster, and I've never had such imputations made against my character before." A pocket-handkerchief was brought out, and her customer, seeing by this danger-signal that matters had gone far enough, beckoned her outside, and pointed to the sign on the window, "Families supplied."

Another time while out for a stroll he met a friend, who inquired where he could buy some tin-tacks. Toole knew the neighbourhood well, and at once replied "Take the next turning on the left, and, if you follow the block right round, you will come to an ironmonger's." The other thanked him, retraced his steps, and turned up the side street as directed. When he had disappeared, the comedian smiled to himself, walked a few steps in the opposite direction, and entered a door. The shopman came up, rubbing his hands vigorously as he said in his most insinuating tone, "What can I do for you to-day, sir?" "Have you any tin-tacks?" "Yes, sir. Certainly, sir." "Then mind you don't sit on them." So saying, Toole quickly beat a retreat, crossed the road, and took up a coign of vantage in a doorway opposite.

At this moment the friend, who had been wandering round the block as directed, came into view, walked a few steps, and, with an exclamation of pleasure at finding

what he wanted, entered the same ironmonger's. The shopman was just recovering from his disgust, and came forward. "Yes, sir. What can I get you, sir?" "Have you any tin-tacks?" "Tin-tacks! No, I have not any tin-tacks, and I am not going to sit on any tin-tacks. You had better clear out of here pretty sharp, or you'll be sorry for it. Don't you or any of your infernal crew dare show your faces inside my shop again, or I'll give you such a——. Get out, will you?"

The would-be purchaser, full of amazement at this stormy interview, rushed wildly from the shop, convinced that he had been in the presence of a madman. The comedian strolled up to him. "Ah, here we are! So you found the place?" Then he winked a wicked wink. "Did you get the tin-tacks all right?"

Of modern playwrights, none was responsible for more Lyceum successes than W. G. Wills. The first of the dramas which he provided was "Charles I". It came out in September '72, and ran for a hundred and eighty nights to crowded houses. This result induced the manager to afford him another opportunity. Accordingly he wrote "The Fate of Eugene Aram," which was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Five years later came "Vanderdecken," an adaptation of the "Flying Dutchman" legend, and in 1880 was produced "Iolanthe," founded upon the story of "King René's Daughter," the title rôle being played by Ellen Terry and Count Tristan by Henry Irving. Later on came a revival of his delightful play "Olivia," a version of the "Vicar of Wakefield," originally performed at the Court Theatre early in '78, where it provided Miss

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Terry with the part which first led to her recognition as one of the leading emotional actresses of her day. Dr. Primrose, in Irving's hands, became a figure of supreme pathos, and it is questionable whether any of the Lyceum pieces, save perhaps "Charles I", moved the audiences so deeply.

Though he made his money and his fame as a playwright, Wills, as a matter of fact, called himself a *painter* by profession, and only did his literary work in spare hours. For years he kept a studio and rooms in Paris, without ever going over to make use of them. When, therefore, a fellow artist, Ernest Normand, came in one day with the news that he was going over to study there, Wills, in his generous way, at once said, "My dear fellow, you must use my rooms while you are away. They are beautifully furnished, and you need only present my card. I haven't been there myself for several years, but you will find them all right, and I'm sure you will be comfortable during your stay." Greatly rejoicing, Mr. Normand set off for Paris. On arriving in the gay city, he drove to the address given. The door was opened, and the card presented. "Is it all right?" "Mais oui, m'sieur! Entrez, s'il vous plait!" and he was ushered up to the "beautifully furnished rooms."

The door opened, and the dream of a sumptuous apartment faded away. All that met the gaze were a massive wardrobe, an unwieldy settee, and a huge bed without any mattress. The fact was, the owner had already lent the flat to a number of other friends. These knew that he would probably never again use the place himself, and so at the end of their stay used to

annex whatever each particularly fancied. A long succession of occupants had displayed such unanimity in their "taking" ways that, at last, nothing was left of the beautiful furniture except the three massive pieces, which had proved too large for convenient removal. All else was "lost to sight, to memory dear."

Wills was ever of a most liberal disposition. On occasions, however, his generosity was carried rather to extremes. A friend who had come with the usual tale of being hard up received an invitation to spend a week at the house. The offer was promptly accepted, but the visit eventually became a perfect visitation. Instead of seven days, it lasted more like seventy times seven. Nor was this all, for the playwright used to put himself out to quite an absurd extent to make the other feel at home. In fact, some one called to see him, and found him sitting outside his own front door, with a pipe in his mouth. "How are you, old man? You won't mind remaining out here, will you? Blank is at home, and, you know, he can't bear the smell of tobacco about the house."

Among other things, his ideas upon the management of money were distinctly crude. When he received payment for a play, he would not take it to be deposited at a bank. Instead, he used to get it changed for coin of the realm, and pour the sovereigns into a drawer, where they would lie for him to take out whatever he required. Unhappily, several of his acquaintances, in a casual Bohemian way, would sometimes "go and do likewise." The consequence was that his stock of bullion did not last as long as it might otherwise have done, and he used to be in a chronic state of "hard-upness."

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In conversation he had a trick of lowering his voice the merest shade, when intending to be particularly confidential with any one. The result was that those around were apt to hear that which ought not to be heard, with sometimes rather startling consequences. One afternoon, when several visitors had dropped in for a chat, the host, at the mystic hour of four, remarked to a couple of special friends in one of his celebrated "undertones," "Don't let us have tea until the others have gone! We can have it so *much* more cosily by ourselves." Every one pretended not to hear, and continued chatting for a few minutes, after which they departed in a body.

Another time a lady came to call, and found him entertaining four or five people. One of these happened to be a well-known model, who sat to Sir Frederick Leighton and other leading painters. Wills at once began the necessary formalities: "Let me introduce Miss Blank to you." Then, dropping his voice a little, he added, in that confidential tone which none could be so deaf as not to hear, "She's perfectly respectable!"

What of those who were associated with Henry Irving in his Lyceum successes? They are names to conjure with indeed. As is well known, Sir Henry was practically the leader of the movement for introducing historical accuracy of costume, and for arranging artistic schemes of colour in the stage pictures. In his efforts he spared no expense, and obtained the co-operation of such men as Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Ford Madox Brown, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Seymour Lucas, and Sir John Tenniel. For his incidental music, moreover, he sought the assistance of the finest com-

posers. Sir Arthur Sullivan was responsible for that of "King Arthur" and "Macbeth"; Sir Julius Benedict for "Romeo and Juliet"; Sir Alexander Mackenzie for "Manfred," "Ravenswood," and "Coriolanus"; Sir Charles Stanford for "Becket" and "Queen Mary"; while Hamilton Clarke undertook "Faust" and "King Lear," and Edward German "Henry VIII," the dances in which became so immensely popular.

A name very intimately associated with many of Sir Henry's greatest successes is that of Geneviève Ward. The great tragedienne appeared with him in "Becket," "King Arthur," "Richard III," and many other productions. In every case her dramatic power and tremendous personality stood out to make hers one of the finest performances in the piece. The memorable effect which she produced upon the audiences in those strong tragic rôles made her ever to be remembered as one of the great figures of the Lyceum. This fact being universally acknowledged, "so must it follow, as the night the day," that Bernard Shaw should take a precisely opposite view and remark, when he met her for the first time, "My dear Miss Ward, after such a splendid career elsewhere, why did you go and *bury yourself at the Lyceum*, where there were no dramatic parts for you?"

With the importunity of youth, the writer some years ago pestered her to write in an autograph book. She kindly consented, and began looking through the pages. In doing so, she came upon a sentence to which was attached the name of Adelina Patti: "Learn all that there is to learn, and then choose your own path." The sentiment was one which did not meet with her

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entire approval. In her eyes it needed an alternative piece of advice, and this she promptly wrote on the next leaf :—

“Where there is but one way, we must take it, lead through what paths it will.”

This was a quotation from “Forget-me-Not,” the play with which her name is so strongly associated. After being produced at the Lyceum, and later transferred to the Prince of Wales’s Theatre, where it enjoyed a long run, the piece was toured by her through every part of the English-speaking world. After giving over two thousand performances, the famous actress appeared as *Stéphanie de Mohrivart* for the last time at the *Opera Comique* in ’89. Miss Robins was the *Alice Verney* on this occasion, while the other leading characters were played by *Nutcombe Gould* and *W. H. Vernon*, who had taken the part of *Sir Horace* upon the trip round the world.

It will be news to some, perhaps, that *Geneviève Ward* originally made her reputation as an operatic star. At the age of three she was able to imitate any song she heard. An Italian vocalist, who had come over to Cuba, heard some of these marvellous efforts, and said to the mother : “That little one will be a great singer some day. When she is old enough I will teach her, if she comes to Europe.” It was from this very lady that Miss Ward took lessons thirteen years afterwards.

Her voice was of phenomenal range. Her operatic career was begun in Milan, at *La Scala*, where, under the name of *Ginevra Guerrabella*, she appeared as *Lucrezia Borgia*. Thence she went to Paris, and in due course to London, making her *début* at one of the “Monday

Pops " with a couple of Italian arie, which she sang with pronounced success. Shortly after this came an engagement at Her Majesty's Opera House, the building which was eventually burned down, and upon the site of which there now stands His Majesty's Theatre. It was an interesting coincidence that Charles Santley made his first appearance at "Her Majesty's" upon the same night.

Later on, Mme. Guerrabella went to America and to Cuba, where she found that her voice had been very much injured by over-exertion. For this reason she retired from operatic work, and commenced to teach singing in New York. Soon she made up her mind to turn her attention once more to a public career, this time as an actress. After studying dramatic art, she made her début at Manchester as Lady Macbeth. This appearance was followed by a long starring tour, and eventually in '79 she produced "Forget-me-Not," which soon made her a world-wide reputation.

In speaking of those who were associated with Sir Henry Irving at the Lyceum, one must add to the names of Ellen Terry and Geneviève Ward those of such well-known artists as Isabel Bateman (Mrs. Crowe) and dear old Mrs. Stirling ; Lena Ashwell, the Elaine in "King Arthur" ; Winifred Emery, who joined in 1881 and went twice to America and Canada in his company ; and Violet Vanbrugh, who played Anne Bullen in "Henry VIII."

A notable engagement was that of Squire Bancroft, who, four years after he had retired from his brilliant management at the Haymarket Theatre, was persuaded to return to the boards for the nonce. On this occasion

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he undertook the part of Abbé Latour in "The Dead Heart," the play in which Sir Henry made such an indelible impression with that wonderfully pathetic scene, the release of the prisoners from the Bastille.

Another memorable appearance was that of Edwin Booth, the great American star, who alternated with Sir Henry the parts of Othello and Iago. As was equally the case with Ellen Terry, Booth had an insuperable objection to reciting in public. In a letter to Antoinette Sterling, he wrote: "I attempted to recite once, but made such a mess of it that I resolved to do so never again. Since then I have declined many tempting offers to read or recite. It requires a talent which I do not possess. At all events, my heart is not in that sort of work. Consequently, any attempt I make must fail."

Among other members of the Lyceum Company, at different times, were George Alexander (who made his principal success in the rôles of Faust and Macduff), F. R. Benson, Gordon Craig (whose début in "The Dead Heart" raised such interest, owing to his being the son of the idolized Ellen Terry), Forbes Robertson, and Martin Harvey, who first joined as a supernumerary. In that capacity he proved himself as changeable as the moon, rarely retaining the same identity in two consecutive acts. He did not have much to say on these occasions, but "kept a devil of a thinking." It was in "Much Ado About Nothing" that he met Miss de Silva, who subsequently became his wife. Again, there were William Mollison, Robert Taber, and poor William Terriss, perhaps the most popular man in the profession. The sadness of his sudden death made so deep an impression on all, that, though nearly a decade has elapsed

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since that terrible episode, his name is never mentioned save with bated breath and an involuntary clutching at the throat. There were none but had a soft spot in their heart for "Breezy Bill," and to have taken him by the hand, and spoken with him even for a few brief moments, is a memory which will ever be held dear.

In 1901 Sir Henry gave the last of his series of Shakespearean revivals, and in the summer of the following year the final season took place. On 3 July a brilliant entertainment was given to the Colonial and Indian representatives, in which was displayed once more that prodigal hospitality for which the management had been ever famous. A fortnight later, on the afternoon of 19 July, there was given a performance of "The Merchant of Venice," in which Miss Terry was again seen in her old part of Portia, and a farewell speech, of which the closing words were, "I beg to remain your ever faithful, ever loving, and most devoted servant," brought to a close the splendid reign of Henry Irving at the Lyceum Theatre.

CHAPTER XVI

THEATRICAL THOUGHTS

DURING Sir Henry Irving's absence from London upon his provincial and American tours, the Lyceum Theatre was not allowed to remain long unoccupied. Brilliant seasons were given by artists of the highest standing, who in every case endeavoured to do honour to the "Chief" by striving to uphold the high ideals and noble standard, for which the classic house was so famous. Among the most notable Shakespearean productions one may cite that of "The Winter's Tale" given by Mary Anderson, "Henry V" by Lewis Waller, and "Hamlet" by Forbes Robertson, who, in the rôle of the gloomy Dane, achieved even greater success than he had done as Romeo, of which part he had long been the acknowledged exponent. The latter he had played for the first time during a holiday in Cornwall. Madame Modjeska happened to be staying at the same little hotel. The rector of the place persuaded the famous actress to give some scenes from "Romeo and Juliet," and she asked Forbes Robertson to join her in doing so. They rigged up a platform in the rectory garden, and this was really the beginning of pastoral plays. When in due course Madame Modjeska produced the Veronese love story at

the Court Theatre, he was engaged to support her, and became from that time the recognized Romeo. Hence, a few years later, when Mary Anderson toured "the States" with the piece, he went over to take up his old part to a Juliet, who was no less sweet. Later on "Our Mary," as she was affectionately called, came over to conquer the hearts of the English public. "The Winter's Tale" was produced at the Lyceum, and in it Forbes Robertson played Leontes, while the American star doubled the parts of Hermione and Perdita.

Mary Anderson, whose beauty was raved about on all sides, had a scarcely less beautiful half-sister, Blanche Griffin, now married to Hermann Herkomer, nephew of the painter. The brother, "Joe" Anderson, was a member of her company, and there was also a half-brother, Edwin, who was the hero of the ensuing episode.

At the time of the Lyceum season he was quite a small boy. One day he was taken as a great treat to see his sister act. Seated in the circle, brimming over with enthusiasm, he became more and more excited as the play proceeded. At last family pride refused to be further suppressed. Gazing round at the packed house, with a look of infinite content, he suddenly burst out in delighted tones, to the amusement of the audience in the vicinity, "That's my sister Maimie!"

When at the height of her popularity, she launched a bombshell into journalistic space from which the British public has hardly yet recovered, though nearly twenty years have elapsed. Miss Anderson announced her intention of closing her career and retiring into private life.



Photo by W. and D. Downey, 57 and 61 Ebury Street, London, S.W.

MISS MARY ANDERSON

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The Stage has known her no more. She has remained obdurate to the many tempting offers which have been made for her return. Happily married to Mr. de Navarro, she spends her time at Broadway, a pretty little village in Worcestershire.

Nat Goodwin, whose wife, Maxine Elliott, is Forbes Robertson's sister-in-law, once brought over a play entitled "Too Much Johnson."

An equally solemn protest should be made against the aforesaid west-country village, under the heading "Too Much Broadway." For several Seasons, everywhere one went, one would be met by some remark about Broadway. Apparently it is a dot of a place, comprising about ten or possibly fifteen residences—cottages or farmhouses, as the case may be. Nearly the whole of artistic London was suddenly beset with the desire to hide from its fellow creatures in some obscure locality. Every one set out on a voyage of discovery. Every one discovered the same spot.

Alfred Parsons and Edwin Abbey were the first on the field, but they were followed in a short time by Mary Anderson, J. S. Sargent, F. D. Millet, the American painter, Edgar Pemberton, the novelist, and Lady Blomfield, the widow of the well-known architect. Maude Valérie White, the composer, who represents music in the place, relates how she was riding through the village on her bicycle one day, and heard a labourer remark as she passed, "Thaat be a mighty large bit o' mooton on a mighty small dish, and no mistake." The story does not deserve a moment's credence ; it contains a palpable inaccuracy. There *are* no labourers at Broadway. The entire population is composed of celebrities.

Certainly, what Miss Valérie White took for a labourer may have been a further celebrity who was thinking of settling there, and had gone down in *disguise* to spy out the land. Unless one accepts that assumption, the whole thing is too thin to deceive the simplest nature.

The few leaders of the artistic world who do *not* live at Broadway—and one might almost count them on the fingers—appear to go down there to stay, when they want to turn out any important piece of work. Of course, Bret Harte did so when he wrote "Sue." One could only expect it. One had a sort of glimmering hope that things would somehow right themselves, when Edwin Abbey *didn't* take a house in the village after "discovering" it. It was no use. He only went to Fairford, a few miles away, and began organizing cricket matches against his neighbours. When J. S. Sargent decided to make a name, he went straight off to spend his summer holidays at "The Inevitable," where he found Barnard, the black-and-white artist, doing the same thing. Upon going over to spend an evening with him, he found that the daughters of his host had lit some Chinese lanterns in the garden. The effect, as they stood beside these, suggested to the American painter an idea. This he imparted to Barnard in a confidential whisper, for fear there might be some celebrities concealed about the grounds who would overhear. The end of it was that he painted the picture "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose," which at once drew public attention to his work, and now hangs on the walls of the Tate Gallery in one of the rooms devoted to the Chantrey Bequest. When A. W. Pinero wanted to write "The Gay Lord Quex," off he went to the eternal village, and

stopped at the "Lygon Arms." When—but no, sufficient instances have been given to support the protest against the locality. It is the spot to which all celebrities will gravitate sooner or later. No one would deny the truth of that for a moment. But to call it "The Hub of the Universe"—well, it's sheer Worcestershire sauce.

There is only one thing which one cannot understand—why Forbes Robertson has never lived there.

That he has not proves one thing clearly. He has not yet done the finest piece of work which he intends to give us. When one saw his Hamlet, one felt that surely he could not well surpass the brilliancy of his performance. Evidently he *is* going to do so. Otherwise, when he was about to study the part, he would have gone down to stop at "The Broad-Way that leadeth to—Distinction." He did *not* study Hamlet at Broadway; therefore Hamlet is not to be his greatest effort. Q.E.D.

When he had given his successful impersonation of the Prince of Denmark at the Lyceum, the close of the season was celebrated by an informal little supper party, to which we received an invitation. It was given in the famous Beefsteak Room, where Sir Henry, during his years of management, was wont to entertain so many distinguished guests. This apartment and its ante-room, lying on the Prompt side of the house, contained a number of pictures, busts, and other mementoes of those whose names had brought honour to the theatre in past years. Above the door was the famous admonition that none should repeat outside what they heard within its precincts.

On this occasion Forbes Robertson, as host, had not

had time to change his stage costume, and therefore appeared in sombre garb, a fur-lined cape thrown over his shoulders. Among those invited to supper were Ben Greet, where the Pastorals come from ; Sarah Brooke, dainty and delightful ; and the Ian Robertsons, whose daughter Beatrice has since been following in the dramatic footsteps of her father and her uncle. There was also present Ada Bayley (better known under the name of Edna Lyall), the sweet novelist, very shy and retiring in manner, at whose house we had been to tea while visiting Eastbourne a few months previously. Mrs. Patrick Campbell entered a few minutes later than the rest of the party, having waited to change her Ophelia costume for an exquisite creation which baffles the descriptive powers of a mere male. But above all, one's gaze turned involuntarily towards one whose white hair, noble features, and pathetic figure struck a note of sadness in the scene of gaiety, bringing to the mind thoughts of the irony, which so often comes in life. This was John Forbes Robertson, who had been an eminent art critic and journalist until blindness came upon him with an overwhelming blow. And now he had come, to be present at the closing scene of his son's greatest success in a character in which, through a cruel fate, he had been unable to see him, save through the eyes of others.

When Forbes Robertson produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre "The Moonlight Blossom," an episode took place which is worth recounting. The plot of the play was laid in China, and among other "properties" required was a gin bottle, for use in a certain scene. After immense trouble, the invaluable Mr. Ian suc-

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ceeded in obtaining a genuine one, such as was actually used in that country to hold this particular liquor. The casual observer, unstudied in the ways of the Heathen Chinee, would have imagined from its shape that it was simply a graceful vase, spiritual rather than spirituous in design.

If the bowl had been stronger
The tale had been longer,

were the classic lines written concerning the Wise Men who went to sea in that very odd substitute for a boat. In the present case, if the bottle had been more gin-like in appearance,

The tale had been shorter.

In fact, it would have resembled the Manx cat : there wouldn't have been any tale at all. However, as already stated, the vessel seemed to be that which it was not. When, therefore, during rehearsal one day it was brought on to the stage in triumph, Mrs. Patrick Campbell saw it, loved it, and with happy inspiration said, "What a sweet vase ! Why not have it placed on a table ? It would give an opportunity for 'business' : I might arrange some flowers in it during one of the scenes."

The "vase" was forthwith annexed for this fresh purpose, and Mr. Ian had to go off to hunt up something else to take its place.

So far, so good. For some nights all went well ; the "business" was introduced, the flowers were arranged in the "vase," and the public admired the effect, being no more learned in this particular branch of Chinese lore than Mrs. Campbell.

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But a day, or rather a night, of reckoning was at hand. The Chinese Ambassador and suite came to see "The Moonlight Blossom." Throughout the performance the party sat entranced, and applauded vigorously upon the smallest provocation. When the curtain had fallen on the last act, the Imperial representative came round to congratulate the manager. In the most exalted of celestial phraseology, he expressed himself as being delighted with all that he had seen and heard. Then he stopped, looked a little doubtful, and added, "One thing I did not understand. Why did the beautiful actress place those exquisite flowers in an empty gin bottle?"

"The rest was silence"; but at the next performance it was wisely decided to leave out the touching incident of adorning with floral tributes the vessel which had been dedicated to the specific use of Bacchus. The mention of this recalls the answer made by a Board-school child, who was asked to explain the meaning of "demagogue," and confused it with "demijohn." "A demagogue is generally filled with beer or other liquor."

Had not Forbes Robertson devoted his principal attention to the Drama, there is no doubt that he would have made a leading position among artists. Like Weedon Grossmith and many other actors, he displayed great talent in painting. At the age of sixteen he went to study at Hetherley's, with a view to entering the Academy Art Schools. His father being so well known as an art critic, he himself naturally moved in artistic circles. Madox Brown took much interest in his work, as also did Rossetti, whose house in Chelsea he used often to visit, taking his drawings with him for criticism.

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He sat, moreover, for the figure of Love in Rossetti's picture of "Dante's Dream." He was very soon admitted to the Art Schools, and here his fellow students included Frank Dicksee, Waterhouse, Gilbert, and Thornycroft.

Of the fine work of which Forbes Robertson is capable there are many examples. Among his portraits are those of Ellen Terry, Modjeska, and Mary Anderson, while one of his best pictures shows the church scene in "Much Ado about Nothing," as produced at the Lyceum by Sir Henry Irving. It was through the influence of W. G. Wills that he made his first appearance on the stage in "Marie Stuart," a play by the painter-dramatist, which was produced at the Princess's Theatre, with Mrs. Rousby in the title part. From this he went out in a travelling company of which Ellen Terry was a member. During these months Charles Reade, the novelist and playwright, who was the organizer of the tour, gave him a commission to do a picture, since he was still keeping up his painting professionally. After this he was engaged to support Phelps, playing Cromwell to that great actor's Wolsey. Thence he went to the Gaiety, to appear in drama with a company which included Mrs. John Wood, Rose Leclercq, Hermann Vezin, and Arthur Cecil. These successes, together with those achieved in the next few years at the Olympic, Lyceum, Haymarket, and other theatres, soon gave him an acknowledged position in the eyes of those P.'s (the Public, the Press, and the Profession) which, in addition to the "Cues," are of such importance to the player.

Forbes Robertson is one of the trio who have made Charterhouse the most successful among the public

schools in providing the stage with prominent actors, the other two Carthusians being Cyril Maude and Fred Kerr. Eton College makes a good second with Arthur Bouchier and Charles Hawtrey.

In his school-days Bouchier spent the greater part of his pocket money in buying toy theatres, on the diminutive stages of which would be enacted the most thrilling of blood-curdling melodramas. During the holidays he would pass most of the time in getting up charades and plays. Any boys in the neighbourhood of Newbury who possessed a vestige of talent, or even displayed the faintest interest in the drama, were at once pressed to take part.

One may make a very fair guess, who was entrusted with the responsible part of the hero. "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself," is an excellent proverb for such occasions. For the results of the good work performed by the young enthusiast of those days we have not far to seek. Can any one doubt that the present movement for the establishment of a permanent National Theatre found its first germ in the *répertoire* seasons given within the hallowed precincts of that Theatre Royal Back-Drawing-Room over twenty-five years ago? Nay more, surely even the Elizabethan Stage Society owed its simple scenic effects to the primitive staging which, at the age of twelve, Bouchier made fashionable among the *élite* of the youth of Newbury.

Another of his most thrilling joys was to go up to town with a chum, and see one of those burlesques which were given at the Gaiety in the days of Nellie Farren, Fred Leslie, Royce, and Edward Terry. Among the principal features of the performance at that time

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was a song concerning "My Love" who was loved with an A because she showed signs of being Angelic, or possessed some equally attractive quality. No less excellent were the grounds for loving her with a B, while the most memorable stanza of all told how she was loved with a W because she was of Double-U-tility.

Captain Bouchier had always wished his son to go into the Army. The latter, however, insisted that the Drama was the career best suited to his tastes, so the Captain struck a bargain. "Go to Oxford and take your degree. Then, if you still wish it, you shall go on the stage." "Agreed," said his son, and forthwith went up to Christ Church, where he duly graduated. Whilst at College, he had a great deal to do with matters theatrical, founded the University Dramatic Society, and was largely instrumental in getting the New Theatre built.

Concerning the origin of the latter achievement he gives an amusing description. When first he went to the 'Varsity, the theatre was a miserable place visited mostly by third-rate companies. This gave rise to much discontent, but the climax came when a certain melodrama was produced. In the first act, one of the characters entered arrayed, not in purple and fine linen, but in a most villainous black-and-white check suit. To describe this as "black-and-white" is to use a purely courtesy title.

There is a tale of a little girl going up to an old gentleman who had come to call on her mother, and with her prettiest smile offering him a white sugared almond. "Thank you, my dear, that is very kind of you," politely replied the visitor, and proceeded to see

whether it tasted as nice as it looked. After a few moments the diminutive daughter of the house said, "Do you like it? I'm so glad." As an afterthought, she added the interesting but tardy piece of information, "It was pink—once!"

So in the present story the check suit was black-and-white—once. By the time it appeared at Oxford it had, after many years of touring, passed into a green old age. Vociferous hoots assailed the appearance of the costume. When, at the end of the act, the wearer announced his determination to leave for distant parts, there were equally loud cheers.

Ten we-e-ary ye-e-e-ars had passed ere the curtain rose upon the second act—at least the programme stated that this period had elapsed. To the audience, who had been listening to a shocking exhibition from the orchestra, it seemed as if it must have been longer. The heroine went through some very touching dialogue with her che-ild, or her agèd father, and then—"What was that?" A knock at the door. Descriptive music. Enter the mysterious unknown, home once more from foreign climes, but still wearing the same old moth-eaten suit in which a decade previously he had left that "dear Motherland" of which Hayden Coffin has so often sung. Such a return as this was altogether too much for the spectators. Some rowdy Christ Church men leaped on to the platform from the stage box, chased the unhappy actor to the wings, thence to the stage door and out into the open street. At last they caught him up and tore the offending garments into as many pieces as decency and time would permit.

News of the "regrettable incident," as the "Daily

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Telegraph" would have called it, reached the ears of the authorities. The upshot of this was that the Vice-Chancellor received a deputation, among whom Arthur Bouchier "figured prominently" in every sense of the phrase. Finally, permission was given for a proper theatre to be built, which "remaineth there even unto this day," and within its hallowed precincts many actors, now prominent on the stage, gained their first laurels.

In due course the new playhouse was opened in '86 with a presentation of "Twelfth Night" by the O.U.D.S., or Oxford University Dramatic Society, to give it the full title. A prologue was specially written for the occasion, and this was delivered by Arthur Bouchier, who enacted both the characters which the scene demanded—

THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF DRAMA

A MODERN UNDERGRADUATE

The opening lines ran as follows :—

Lone and dishonoured, lurking in the shade,
Creeping in twilight darkness, half afraid
To meet the eyes of honest men, I stand
With lowered face and deprecating hand
Irresolute whether to remain or flee—
Spirit of Drama, as it used to be.

What's this? A brand-new Theatre? Then 'tis clear
My day is over, I've no business here.
At last instead of Darkness shines the Day,
Arise, thou modern Spirit of the Play.

Three years before this, Arthur Bouchier had appeared as Shylock in the performance of "The Merchant of

Venice," given by the Philo-Thespians, a 'Varsity Dramatic Club which was afterwards merged in the O.U.D.S. Several well-known names were connected with the representation. Jessica was taken by Mrs. Margaret Woods, the well-known novelist, daughter of Dean Bradley and wife of the Rev. Henry Woods, the present Master of the Temple. Mrs. W. L. Courtney took Portia, while her husband played "Bassano," as the gentleman was called by a certain society lady whose knowledge of fashionable photography was greater than her intimacy with Shakespeare. Bromley Davenport, M.P., was the Gobbo, while Lionel Monckton composed the incidental music, and Fred Weatherley, the lyric writer, who was at that time a resident "coach," was responsible for the prologue.

During those three years I spent up at Trinity, the audiences at the theatre were fairly rowdy. In the case of musical comedy the excitement increased steadily throughout the week. By the last evening it had worked up to such a pitch, that it was difficult to hear any dialogue whatsoever, and the familiar songs were reinforced from the front of the house by an unpaid and unsolicited choir of what could scarcely be termed angel voices. Into such a wild state did the Saturday night "rags" develop, that notice was eventually given by the authorities, in whose veins must have flowed the blood of "ould Oireland," to the effect that unless the noise raised upon the final evenings were stopped, the companies *would not be allowed to give any last performance at all*, but would in future finish on the Friday evening.

The Oxford audience must have been a trying one to face. The unfortunate "small part" ladies and gentle-

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men who had one or, at most, two lines to utter, came off specially badly. In J. M. Barrie's delightful piece "The Professor's Love Story," which came up for a week, one of the scenes was laid in the meadows. During the act a servant had to enter with a picnic basket, and inquire, "Where shall I lay the lunch, sir?" These words instantly captivated the fancy of those in front. A mighty roar went up from the assembled undergraduates. "Bravo! Encore!" This went on for some minutes, and eventually, before the dialogue was allowed to continue, the unhappy man was obliged to repeat his poor little ewe-line three times, amid the most deafening applause.

On another occasion, one of George Edwardes' greatest successes, "The Shop Girl," paid the town a visit. In the Bazaar scene there comes a point at which the heroine (played in the original production by the ever-captivating Ellaline Terriss) is made to say in modest and retiring tones, "Oh, but I'm only a poor shop-girl!" To this the millionaire has to reply with a line which in London used to be received by the Pittites with the greatest enthusiasm. Upon the Saturday night at Oxford, the fair *ingénue* spoke with due diffidence of her humble calling. The gentleman of vast wealth swelled out his chest, took a deep breath and a step forward, and prepared to deliver his telling speech. But he was promptly and effectively forestalled. Some forty undergraduates rose with one accord, and roared out in fine-measured tones, whose ultra-patriotic ardour gave the fullest dramatic emphasis to every possible and impossible point, "WELL—(a pause)—there's NO HARM—(another pause)—against BEING—(a perfectly thrilling

pause this time)—a SHOP-GIRL!” The speech ended amid wild shouts of laughter.

But the special characteristic of the Saturday night was the insatiable desire for speeches. Only a single occasion can the present writer recall, upon which the leading man escaped without having to make one. He had apparently lost his head during the unwonted scene of revelry witnessed during the evening. As soon as the curtain came down on the last act, he rushed to his dressing-room, locked the door, turned off the gas, and concealed himself behind his travelling-basket. From the distance there floated into his hiding-place long-drawn-out calls of “Spee-ee-eech!” Anon came knocks at the door and the imploring voice of one of the company begging him to come out. “But never a word spake he!” What, venture out to throw himself upon the mercy of such an audience? Never! Why, compared with such a position, the Christian Martyrs being torn to pieces by the savage beasts were “perfectly peaceful persons.” Talk of “making the punishment fit the crime?” What crime could the Mikado have found for which such a doom as this could be considered suitable? No! Rather let him be Napoleonic and preserve a masterly inactivity. Let him show them that, like the young gentleman in the “Ballad,” he too could preserve a “splendid silence.” No! A thousand times no! “J’y suis, j’y reste!” And never a word spake he.

The management in front were at a loss what to do. The roars of “Spee-ee-eech!” grew angrier and angrier. As a last resource the lights were turned down. This action called forth an indignant “Booh!” while two

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venturesome spirits leaped the barrier into the orchestra and gave a prolonged duet upon the piano and big drum, nearly wrecking both instruments. Thus the evening was brought to a close.

Ill news travels fast. It was soon realized by touring managers that Oxford audiences followed the advice given in advertisements, "Ask for what you want, and see that you get it." Never again did one find the visiting company back out of giving a speech when it was requested, or, to be more strictly accurate, demanded.

If the results were sometimes tame, they were more than atoned for by the interesting and amusing orations to which at others one was able to listen. It was, for instance, on one of these Saturday evenings that Arthur Bouchier, having played with Miss Vanbrugh in the "Queen's Proctor," told the above story of how the existing theatre had come into existence. Of all the speeches, the simplest, and therefore perhaps the most charming, was made by Dorothea Baird, a resident in the town for many years. Her earliest attempts at "play acting" had been made in some of the performances given by the O.U.D.S. Ben Greet saw her, and persuaded her to join his touring company: her doing so proved to be a great piece of good fortune for every one concerned. A few months later, Beerbohm Tree decided to produce Du Maurier's "Trilby," and was chatting about it one day with Mr. Greet. Suddenly, in the midst of conversation, the manager of Pastoral fame was struck with an idea. "Why, I know the very girl to play Trilby. She would be ideal for the part. Du Maurier might have been describing her very

self when he wrote the novel." The suggestion was followed by an interview at which Mr. Tree at once saw the startling coincidence, and forthwith engaged her "to appear in her Baird feet" (so her Oxonian friends put it), with what result it is not necessary to write.

And now Mr. Greet had brought back Dolly Baird—as she had always been called in undergraduate circles—to play Galatea to the Pygmalion of another Oxonian. At the end of the performance a hearty round of applause brought up the curtain to disclose Ben Greet, with Galatea on his right and Pygmalion on his left. The manager stepped gaily forward and began to thank the audience for their kind reception. Before he had finished his first sentence he was drowned by deafening cries of "Dolly Baird! Dolly Baird!" Accepting the situation at once, he stopped short, smiled, said "Certainly," and rather basely retired up stage, leaving his leading lady to face the situation alone. Miss Baird shook her head, and made a sort of "I-would-if-I-could-but-I-can't" gesture. Seeing that this had no effect beyond making the cries grow louder and more insistent, she moved a few steps nearer the footlights and spoke a few delightfully unaffected words: "I cannot tell you how happy I am to be among you all again; but I really don't know what to say except 'Thank you very much.'"

This appearance was followed not many months later by her marriage to H. B. Irving, who had been at one time in residence at New College after previous education at Marlborough.

Another Oxonian, and one, moreover, who has exercised a very considerable influence over the Stage, is

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F. R. Benson. By means of his company he has provided the necessary grounding in theatrical work for a great number of prominent actors and actresses, who have owed to him some of the most useful experience of their early training. To realize the truth of this, one has but to recall a few names of those who occupy important places in the dramatic world : Lily Brayton and Oscar Asche ; Jessie Bateman and Ada Ferrar ; Henry Ainley, Graham Browne, Alfred Brydone, O. B. Clarence, Leslie Faber, A. E. George, Walter Hampden, William Mollison, Lyall Swete, T. B. Thalberg, and Harcourt Williams.

In addition to H. B. Irving and F. R. Benson, there came from Oxford Holman Clarke, Nigel Playfair, Lionel Monckton, Courtney, and James Hearn, who enlisted under the Lyceum banner soon after he went down, and remained with the company until Sir Henry's death. Nor must one forget Paul Rubens, who has become a leading light of musical comedy, as composer, lyric writer, and librettist. At the 'Varsity he was one of the most popular men of his year, and was wont to display his versatility at smoking concerts by singing to his own accompaniment songs which he had himself written. This feat he varied by conducting the college orchestras in their light opera selections. It was during undergraduate days that he gained one of his first successes with a song accepted by George Edwardes. It was entitled "The Little Chinchilla," and was placed in the safe hands of Ellaline Terriss to introduce to the Gaiety public.

In comparing the Stage of the present day with what it is reported to have been some thirty years ago, one

cannot help being struck by one very great change. In the earlier days it was practically an unknown thing to find among those, who were treading the boards, any who had received either a public school or a university education : yet at the present time most of the prominent managers have been to either the one or the other, or in many cases both. To recapitulate names which have been already mentioned, there are among this number F. R. Benson, Arthur Bouchier, J. Forbes Robertson, Charles Hawtrey, H. B. Irving, and Cyril Maude. Then again Frederick Harrison and Martin Harvey were at King's College School, the former going on to Trinity, Cambridge, while H. Beerbohm Tree was educated at a college in Germany.

The change is indeed a marked one. To what is it due ? If one might be allowed to hazard a suggestion, it would be that it has been largely owing to the alteration brought about in the social position of the actor during the last quarter of the century. Hence it may be laid to the credit of that one man who was pre-eminent above all others in working for the betterment of the Stage—Henry Irving.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME WRITERS AND CLERICS

OF those, who are to be met with among literary circles, one of the most charming is Madame Sarah Grand. At the commencement of her career she intended to go in for a good deal of public speaking, and believing in the adage that, if a thing is worth doing it is worth doing well, she went through a course of elocution lessons with Geneviève Ward. The novelist has always been a firm believer in temperance, and was asked by the leaders of the movement to speak at some of their meetings. Unfortunately, she was not in very robust health at the time, and upon consulting a doctor was told that it would be necessary to keep up her strength with burgundy. The idea of delivering from a public platform a fervid exhortation to put down drink, and of pausing every few minutes to put down some alcoholic liquid herself, seemed a little out of keeping with the situation, and the invitation had to be refused.

Later on, however, she undertook several lecturing tours: indeed, she was leaving upon one soon after I had the pleasure of meeting her at Tunbridge Wells, where her home is located. Madame Grand was the first authoress to make a lecturing tour through

America. Since that time several other well-known *littérateurs* of the fair sex have been approached, including Mrs. Craigie and Mrs. Alec Tweedie (daughter of the late Dr. Harley), so famed for her many enthralling books on travel.

The subjects which Mme. Grand chose were those which have attained such popularity over here—"Mere Man," "Only Woman," "The Art of Happiness," and "Things One Remembers to Forget." Throughout the tour it was her intention to avoid social festivities of every kind, and to follow the example of the dramatic profession in taking no regular meal later than four o'clock. In this she was only profiting by the experience of a certain famous writer who did not take proper care of himself, but would finish his dinner only a few minutes before he began his lecture. The consequence was inevitable. He soon began to suffer from attacks of indigestion, which eventually became so acute that he was obliged to bring his tour to a premature close.

Of all the novels which Sarah Grand has written none created more sensation than "The Heavenly Twins." It was read far and wide, and with mixed feelings. She tells a good story concerning its reception at the hands of a fiery old colonel, who was travelling on a steamer up the Nile. Being somewhat bored with his own company and with that of his fellow travellers, the warrior bold found a copy of "The Heavenly Twins" in the saloon, and commenced reading it. His face was a study. It grew longer and longer, and showed constantly increasing disgust. At last, after reading some thirty pages, he leaped from his deck-chair, rushed to the side of the ship, and hurled the offending novel into the water, where, Jonah-like, it doubtless found refuge in the internal

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regions of a crocodile. This dire punishment did not, however, completely satisfy the officer. With fiery eye he gazed round. Then, with a cry of "Eureka!" he threw into the river his deck-chair, presumably *faute de mieux*. Had Mme. Grand been present, *she* might have been the *mieux*, the fair young life of the deck-chair being spared in her favour. "It's an ill wind that blows no one any good," and the crocodile might have been rather pleased at the alternative diet.

In an earlier chapter was related the story of Sarah Grand and "old Haweis." Here is an anecdote in which the position is reversed. During an afternoon reception, she found herself seated beside a sweet old lady who apparently knew no one, and was in consequence most disconsolate. The novelist, taking compassion upon her loneliness, turned round and began to chat with her. After a few minutes the hostess came up accompanied by a gaunt, sour-looking woman, who *looked* as if she possessed a combination of all the bad qualities of Macbeth's wife and Hamlet's mother. The lady of the house introduced her three guests with the usual indistinctness of utterance, as though afraid any of them should hear the other's name. The old lady caught nothing out of the confused murmur beyond the word "Grand." Turning to the new-comer with a winning smile, she queried, "What did our hostess say was grand?" Lady MacHamlet snapped her head off in a moment. "She said 'Sarah Grand.' Didn't you listen?" The other apologized and tried a little polite conversation. Everything that she said was met with a rude, crusty answer, so the dear old thing gave up all further attempt, and lapsed into silence, whereat, with a bark of

farewell, Lady MacHamlet retired from the scene. The old lady fanned herself for a few moments. Then having partially recovered, she shook her head, and in a pained voice remarked, "So *that's* Sarah Grand."

The authoress has an amusing reminiscence of Paul Blouet (Max O'Rell). He had expressed a desire to know her, and an introduction was arranged at the house of a mutual friend. As soon as they had shaken hands, he turned to his wife and said in a triumphant tone, "There, my dear, I told you so!" Evidently there had been an argument as to whether Sarah Grand would be introduced as *Madame* or *Mrs.*

While staying with some friends at Marlow one summer, it was my privilege to meet the author of "John Bull and his Island," "Her Royal Highness Woman," and so many other entertaining books. Among the guests was a new American soprano who had come "out of the Everywhere into here," if one may borrow from George Macdonald's famous poem a phrase which sounds so like a reference to Alien Immigration. One cannot help feeling glad that the lady has since returned to the Everywhere, or at any rate to the American portion of the Everywhere. Upon one never-to-be-forgotten evening she insisted upon singing various well-known hymns adapted to the most impossible tunes. The climax was reached when "Nearer, my God, to Thee" was rendered to the music of "Robin Adair." This was too much for the nerves of the company, who, with a hurried good night, left the room in a body. To their jaded intellects it seemed advisable—

Rather to fly from ills they could not bear,
Than stay for others that they knew not of.

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Luckily for him, Max O'Rell was not present at this orgy. He was spared much suffering. When he did arrive he was full of fun, and entertained us with the recital of the terrible experiences passed through that morning in getting off for the holidays. In glowing colours he pictured the early rising at six, breakfast at seven, the final cramming into already overflowing boxes of countless necessities which had been hitherto overlooked—the piling up of a fourwheeler with trunks, bags, parcels, umbrellas, and rugs, the journey to the station, the fight for tickets, the rushing hither and thither from platform to platform, with the question ever on the lips to be brought out whenever any one in official garb dared show his face, “Does the train for Marlow start from here?” and the eternal answer, “No; I *think* it starts from number so-and-so, but you had better ask again to make sure.” The same number was never quoted by any two in consecution.

It was such a scene as this that was the means of upsetting Suzanne Sheldon, the beautiful American actress, who is married to Henry Ainley, of “Paolo and Francesca” fame. Occasion demanded that she should catch a train at one of the most confusing of the London termini, during the busiest part of the day. She went first to the Underground station. From there she was directed to seek out the “main line” by way of a vast subterranean labyrinth which must have been built upon the lines adopted by Minos. When she emerged she could see nothing for some moments.

In writing of his visit to England, Emerson gives a delightful description of the London atmosphere. “On a fine day it is like looking up a chimney; at

other times it is like looking *down* one." The volume of smoke into which his fair countrywoman emerged on this occasion was worse even than that. Trains to the right of her, trains to the left and to the front, vied with each other in pouring out stifling fumes. When her eyes grew accustomed to the foggiess she made out the grey outlines of a railway employ  , and asked whether she was right. "Oh, no, Miss; it's over that bridge, at number four platform. This is number twelve." She tore across. Mazeppa's ride could not have been more furious. When she arrived she was directed back to number fourteen. On retracing her steps and eventually getting to this new platform, only to be again told "Not there, not there," she became hopeless. Turning to a group of porters with a majestic gesture of mingled appeal and despair, she burst out, "Does any one in this station know from which platform any train bound for any place whatsoever is even likely to start?"

Max O'Rell was luckier than Miss Sheldon. After Herculean efforts, he was able to discover not only the right train, but an empty carriage. When everything had been bundled in, the seats were carefully filled with bags and papers, in that truly British style, which seeks, even in an empty railway compartment, to uphold the assertion that an Englishman's Home is his Castle. It does not always follow, by the way, that an Englishman's Castle is his Home. A good many, who own castles, are much too poor to keep them up, so have to let them and make their own home elsewhere.

Having filled all available seats in the carriage with his belongings, O'Rell gave a sigh of relief, settled down in

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a seat, lit a cigarette, and "enjoyed a well-earned rest," just as actors do when they can't get an engagement. "Capital," he remarked; "we have just timed it nicely."

After a few moments he noticed his wife becoming more and more disturbed.

"What have you lost, my love? Are not the four umbrellas, ten bags, and fifteen brown-paper parcels here?"

"Yes, but—Oh, I dare not tell you! You will never forgive me."

"What is the matter? Pray calm yourself."

"I—no—I can't tell you."

"Yes, yes, let me hear!"

"Well, I have left my jewel-box wide open on the dressing-table at home. What is to be done?"

Only one thing *could* be done. Hubby had to rush off home, make everything safe, and return to Paddington in time to see the next train for Marlow steam out of the station, leaving him with two hours to wait before he could finally get away on his holiday.

Truly, even the life of a professional maker of merriment is not always brimful of fun. Turning to his wife with a comical look, he expressed his intention of having no more family holidays, but of going away in future—alone.

Max O'Rell had only recently returned from the States, where he had met Mark Twain, and he recounted to us some of his friend's latest witticisms. The conversation had one day turned on the subject of golf, and the American humorist gave his views on the game in that slow, drawling voice and imperturbable manner for which he is famed.

"Say, I've been studying this game of golf pretty considerably. I guess I understand now how it's played. It's this way. You take a small ball into a big field, and you try to hit it—the ball, not the field. At the first attempt you hit the field and not the ball. After that you probably hit the air, or else the boy who is carrying your bag of utensils. When you've gone on long enough, you possibly succeed in attaining your original object. If the boy's still alive, you send him off to look for the ball. *If he finds it the same day*, you've won the game!"

Another story concerned the reply which he made upon being asked how he had enjoyed his last voyage across the Atlantic.

"Vury, vury much indeed—after the first seven days."

Amusing, too, were a couple of notes written by him. The first, to an editor for whom he had done a good deal of work, ran as follows :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—You have not paid me for my last humorous column. Do you think I write for fun?"

The other, to a friend, had been sent at the time his book "The Innocents Abroad" was being brought out :

"I have almost decided after all not to call my new book 'The *Innocents* Abroad.' I find that I am the *only* Innocent on the Continent."

Perhaps, however, the smartest of all his sayings was the answer given to a friend who had come in distress to tell him that her cook, an old and valued servant, had fallen on the fire during a fit, and been burned to death. The mistress had been much attached to her, and wished to have an inscription engraved on the tombstone.

"What would you suggest as a suitable text, Mr. Clemens?"

"I guess you can't do better than '*Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*'"

The above words suggest the name of the late headmaster of Harrow, Dr. Welldon. A man broad in mind as in body, he was at times distinctly unconventional. This characteristic was borne in upon one by a sermon which he delivered in Eton Chapel. As he mounted the pulpit at the close of the hymn, the boys began to settle back as comfortably as the pews would permit. *O tempora! O more ease!* They were not, perhaps, all that could be desired from that point of view. In fact, they had a way of catching the head, which was the reverse of restful. The preacher looked round impressively and prepared to commence his discourse. Then something unexpected happened. The unexpected always *does* happen during the week days. We expect that. But on Sundays, it happens only rarely. The clergyman, for instance, expects his congregation to practise what he preaches. But it would be most unexpected, if they did so. In fact, the situation calls to mind the predicament in which an Irish lecturer found himself, upon being confronted by an extremely meagre attendance. After looking sadly round, he prefaced his speech with the observation: "I am sorry not to find as large an audience as I had *anticipated*. But, sure, I never thought I should."

When Dr. Welldon leaned forward in the pulpit, all, of course, imagined that a text would be given out in the old familiar way, followed by a sermon preached in the old familiar style upon the old familiar subjects.

Instead of this a sentence was quietly delivered, which by its utterly unexpected character caught the ear of the congregation. "Have you ever watched a cat walking along the top of a wall?" Every one felt that there was going to be something out of the ordinary. "Have you noticed how carefully and how delicately she picks her way among the bits of broken glass which are scattered along the pathway?"

A faint smile began to find its way into the faces of the congregation, as the sun tries to pierce through a mist. Still as yet no one could quite make out what was coming.

"That, my friends, is *walking circumspectly*." The mist was dispelled and the sun burst forth in all his glory. The congregation was amused and interested. What was more, their attention was at once caught, and was held through the powerful sermon which the preacher proceeded to deliver upon the text "Walk circumspectly."

If such an effect can be produced over a number of adults by simple illustrations, how much more necessary is it for these to be used, when the congregation includes a number of children?

The following story related by a Sunday-school teacher gives an insight into the feeling produced on the infant mind by those edifying sermons which abound in "sesquipedalian verbiage."

After listening in hopeless bewilderment for some time, one of the little ones whispered to the teacher, "What's 'e sayin', please, Miss?" The mistress condescended to explain, "He says that if you are a good girl you may go to Paradise!" and was met with the

rather startling reply, "May I take my gloves off first, please, Miss? My hands is so 'ot and sticky."

At the same church on another occasion, a tiny mite who was present at divine service for the first time in her life, was tremendously impressed, when the clergyman, arrayed in his white surplice, ascended the pulpit. She gazed for a few moments in open-mouthed wonder, and then pointed towards him with a sticky finger. In dealing with such children one may state a postulate. "Let it be granted that all school-children have sticky hands." It is as invariably true as any which are given by Euclid. The pointing of the finger was but the precursor of an awestruck whisper—one resembling those of melodrama, which can be heard by every one in the building save the heroine, who is four yards from the speaker—"Please, teacher, is that God?"

One may, perhaps, be allowed to add a third story. It is about another little girl, whose mother was a laundress. The class were told one morning about the Heavenly Hosts, and were shown a picture in which the artist depicted a group of angels wearing the white garments, with which one has been taught to associate them. The juxtaposition of the two ideas, the numberless Hosts of Angels, and the raiment in which they were clothed, started her mind running on a familiar tack, based on the experiences of the laundry. Full of wonder she raised a hand, which differed from that of the previous child only by reason of containing a greater amount of stickiness. "Please, teacher?" "Yes, dear, what is it?" "What a big 'wash' Mrs. God must have."

But to return to Dr. Welldon. Though head-master

of Harrow, he was educated at Eton. This fact gave rise to a saying which used to make the small Harrovians' apple of pride savour of the Dead Sea, lose its bloom and shrivel to dust. When any of them cracked up their school in the presence of an Etonian, they would be met by the crushing retort, given with an air of "Can any good thing come out of Zion?"—

"Well, you had to come to Eton for a head-master, anyhow!"

When Dr. Welldon gave up his position some few years ago, this brilliant and never-failing answer forthwith died a peaceful death.

To the small boys it used to be a matter of the greatest excitement to see him walking with Dr. Warre, who recently resigned his post at Eton. It almost invariably led to a heated discussion as to which of the two head-masters weighed the most, and measured the greatest number of "feet" round the chest: one could hardly imagine it as being reckoned in mere inches. Dr. Warre was truly a man of terrifying exterior. In spite of this, he was of a warm and sympathetic nature. When in the course of the "Latin Construe" a line was reached, of which the word-for-word translation was "War(re) is a hard master," it was received with mirth. But it was felt all the same that the sentence could not apply to the head-master.

Among the many eminent divines who used to come down to preach in chapel at Eton, one of the most interesting was Dr. Stubbs, the late Bishop of Oxford. In spite of the fact that he published a "Book of Select Charters," which can scarcely be recommended to those in search of light and amusing literature for a summer

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holiday, the Bishop was a man of infinite jest. Of the stories told of his wit, the following are fair examples.

In his diocese there resided a tiresome rector, who was perpetually bothering him about trifles, and asking his opinion on all manner of subjects. At one time he proposed to put up in his church a certain religious picture. Before doing so, however, he felt that it was only right to ask the Bishop's opinion. In due course he sent a long letter to that worthy prelate, inquiring whether it would be right to hang it. He was an impatient man, so after waiting a few days and receiving no reply, he sent another lengthy epistle on the subject. After a brief interval this was followed by a third.

The Bishop, who happened to be away all this time, returned home in due course. Among the pile of correspondence awaiting him, he found the first letter, read it carefully through, and put it aside to be answered. Then he came to the second, opened it, and skimmed it. When he saw the third, it was too much for him. He glanced at the writing and filled in a telegraph-form. It was short, and distinctly ambiguous: "Hang the picture!"

There is another good anecdote about him. He was at one time being constantly worried by requests from various out-of-the-way spots, that he should pay them a visit and hold a Confirmation. He was very good-natured in doing so, but matters grew worse and worse. Finally, there came the fabled last straw which gave the camel the hump: he received a letter from a tiny village on the furthest confines of the diocese, stating that there were two or three children to be confirmed. Would it be too much to ask him to come and hold a

Confirmation? Upon reading it, the Bishop turned to a friend and remarked: "I think some alteration should be made in the Prayer Book. There is a passage which states that 'so soon as children are come to a competent age, and can answer the questions in the Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop for Confirmation.' It *ought* to read, 'So soon as children are come to a competent age, the Bishop shall be brought to them to confirm them.'"

Another dignitary of the Church who can display a pretty turn of wit is the Bishop of Newcastle.

He was travelling one day on the railway, happy in having a compartment to himself. His solitude, unhappily, did not remain long undisturbed: at one of the stations a small boy, home for the holidays, entered the same carriage. After a few minutes the young gentleman took out a twopenny cigar. This he made a great show of clipping, after studying it for some moments to discover which of the two ends was supposed to receive the delicate attention. When finally he produced a matchbox, the Bishop looked significantly at the windows, as a gentle hint that they did not bear the label dedicating the interior to devotees of the Fragrant Weed. Observing this, the youngster turned to him, and said in a lordly way, "You don't mind my smoking?" This was met with the hearty response, "Not in the least, if you don't mind my being extremely unwell."

Whilst on the subject of the Church, one may say a few words about the Reverend Edward Ker-Gray, surely one of the strangest of clerics. For some fifteen years he was incumbent of St. George's Chapel in Albemarle

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Street, and conducted his services upon the most extraordinary lines. He made a sensation which will not be readily forgotten, by initiating special Sunday Evening Services, at which he made widely known his desire that the members of the various Ladies' Clubs situated in Dover Street should attend in full evening dress. The bold innovation failed to catch on to any great extent, in spite of much paragraphing in the contemporary Press.

It was always his great desire apparently to be mixed up with artistic circles. Any one or anything connected with Music or the Drama had an immense fascination for him. It used to be his great joy to get a celebrity of the Concert or, still better, of the Operatic world to come and sing for him. Upon these auspicious occasions there would be special scented programmes. They were not sold at sixpence each, but few people would have been surprised if they *had* been, for at the services it certainly appeared to the casual outsider that Church and Stage became almost merged into one.

When clerical duties did not claim him, he divided his time between jogging round the Row upon a second Rosinante, and paying a round of social visits. He had the repute of being an amateur musician. At one house where the writer met him, he had brought a cornet. This he announced that he was going to play. However, at the end of dinner he came to the conclusion that he would not have sufficient breath to make the attempt with success. On saying good night, he went off without the instrument, and left it at the house for six months before fetching it away. Presumably, therefore, he did not practise upon it very regularly. At a second house he appeared with a silver flute, and again ex-

pressed his intention of performing during the evening. When the time came, he discovered that he had brought no music. Again he left the instrument behind. On this occasion, however, it was only for a month. At a third house he brought the music, but forgot the clarionet, or whatever it was. At a fourth the hostess said that she had always understood from his conversation that he was an adept on the drum. This was too large for him to take about, so she had never actually heard it. It may have been pure accident that something happened each time to prevent one from hearing him perform, but it was certainly an odd coincidence.

Dr. Ker-Gray's evening-dress services were a curious experience to go through, but they paled before the service which is sometimes given in the University Church at Oxford. Once a term it is customary for some preachers to deliver a sermon in Latin. Unhappily, I hit on one of them. The 'Varsity proctors are supposed to attend in their official capacity, but they know that sermon; "it coomes fram Sheffield." Consequently, those gentlemen, if they are wise, send each a pro-proctor as a pro-lamb to the slaughter. As each "proggins" (so he is called in 'Varsity lingo) has two of these deputies to choose from, history does not relate how the latter arrange which is to offer himself as the scapegoat. Possibly they decide "with the cyards" as did "the boys" in "Sunday," the Bret Hartean piece which Julia Neilson and Fred Terry produced at the Comedy some time back. Maybe they toss up as did Edward Terry in "Sweet Lavender," "Britannia washes, and The Queen wipes." Who knows? In any case, one of them—the loser presumably—has to attend. The

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rest of the congregation consists of four classes of people. Firstly, there are those who don't know what they are in for ; secondly, the confirmed sufferers from sleeplessness, who take it as a soporific ; thirdly, those who go there purely as an experience, mostly Americans ; and lastly, those enthusiastic dons for whom the language has attractions.

Among the latter is usually to be seen Robinson Ellis, the Professor of Latin Literature. At one time he was a good conversationalist on every subject. Music delighted him, and he was never happier than when attending a classical concert ; he was a great authority on painting and every branch of Art ; as to literature, he was *au fait* with all the best prose writings in the English language, and had the finest poems at his finger-ends. Since being appointed Professor, however, he has gradually given up everything outside his special studies, and in conversing with him nowadays one finds it difficult to believe that he has ever been different. Mrs. Grant Allen, the widow of the famous writer, tells a delightful story of being introduced to him at Oxford. For half an hour he talked to her of Catullus, his favourite Latin author. All her remarks were strictly non-committal—"Really !" "Indeed !" "Quite so !" "Very true !" or "Most interesting !" The Professor was charmed, and next day remarked to a mutual friend, "I had no idea Mrs. Grant Allen was such a brilliant scholar. She holds exactly the same views on Catullus as myself."

Mr. Ellis has always led the simplest life, and it is strange to attend one of the dinner parties, which he occasionally gives in the College precincts. At these

functions, while his guests are partaking of champagne, port, and other luxuries, he himself sits at the head of the table sipping toast-water.

By continental authorities he is considered one of the greatest Latin scholars in England, and is never happy away from his work. If one goes to his rooms in Trinity, one finds him completely wrapped up in his beloved manuscripts. This must be taken in a metaphorical sense: for actual covering he favours a black coat, white evening tie, trousers which always bag at the knee (one would almost imagine that when ordering new ones he gave instructions for them to be bagged beforehand), and either cap and gown or top-hat and umbrella. Robinson Ellis without one of these alternatives is inconceivable to the undergraduate mind. Apparently he goes on the system of, "If I were not Cæsar, I would be Brutus," only in his eyes this is changed to "If I wore not Cap and Gown, it would be Gamp and Topper." For him no other head-gear exists, neither of felt, cloth, nor straw. As for Panama, perish the thought! In the photograph which he proudly shows to friends he is standing in a conservatory all booted and spurred. "Spurred" means with him the aforesaid costume. "Booted" has a greater significance, which those who know their Vanity Fair Caricatures will readily recognize.

One gets a strange insight into his daily life from a remark he was once heard to make. Some undergraduates were discussing the prospects of boating, tennis, and cricket at the beginning of a summer term. The Professor stood gravely by, his mind far away, probably fixed upon some recently discovered MSS. of Catullus.

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Hearing the word "Summer" addressed to him, he came back to earth from building manuscripts in the air. "Summer? Yes, I am always glad when summer comes, for then I can go on reading at my table without any interruption. In winter I have repeatedly to leave the books to warm my hands at the fire, and I find it most trying for concentrated study."

There is a story told, which shows how he views everything through, not rose-tinted glasses, but Latin-literature-tinted spectacles. He was one day taking a friend round a museum of antiquities. They stopped before a magnificent old Roman statue, for which both expressed admiration. "Is it not exquisite?" said the friend, gazing with delight at the fine pose of the figure. "Yes, indeed," replied the lover of the Latin language, looking fixedly at the pedestal; "I have seldom seen a more beautifully worded inscription."

Sorely am I tempted to bid an all too willing pen flow on in further records of the thousand and one tales concerning 'Varsity men and matters. Phœnix-like they have risen from among the smouldering ashes of dormant memories, called into new life by the setting down of these few anecdotes.

It would be hard indeed for any one to pass three years at Oxford without encountering material for stories almost without number, and few colleges can have been happier hunting-grounds than Trinity. Therefore might my pen emulate the fabled brook, were it not that already I seem to hear the o'er-wearied reader cry, "Hold, enough: Prithee, some other time." Have patience; a few concluding words, and it shall be ended.

ANTOINETTE STERLING AND OTHER CELEBRITIES

If in aught I have offended, I have done so unwittingly, and earnestly crave forgiveness.

Eighteen months have not yet elapsed, since under the kind and generous auspices of Sir George Newnes, I took my first timid plunge into the rippling river of journalism. That I have now ventured so soon into the stormy seas of authorship, a veritable minnow among Tritons, has been mainly due to the desire that some record of my mother's life should appear in permanent form, before too great a time shall have elapsed. Literary inexperience has unhappily made it impossible for me to treat the subject as it should have been treated. I can only hope that those who peruse these pages may do so with indulgent eye.

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